SPELLCASTER CLASSES WIZARDS · SORCERERS CLERICS · DRUIDS · BARDS

DRAGON®

EXCLUSIVE

EBERRON

First Look at D&D's **NEW WORLD**

D&D MINIATURES

Are they right for you?

Secret MAGIC

- ALTERNATIVE **CLERIC CLASSES**
- **INSTRUMENTS** OF POWER
- VARIANT **DRUID CLASSES**
- **CUSTOM** SORCERER POWERS
- TEMPLATE **YOUR SPELLS**

NEW BEN BOVA FICTION

100% OFFICIAL DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®

$5.99US $8.99CAN

09

0 74808 01823 9

paizo publishing™

SPECIAL UPDATE SERIES #2 OF 3

"RPG HEAVEN...

(Greyhawk) is at the top of my can't-wait-to-play list"
- PC Gamer

IGN.Com– E3 2003

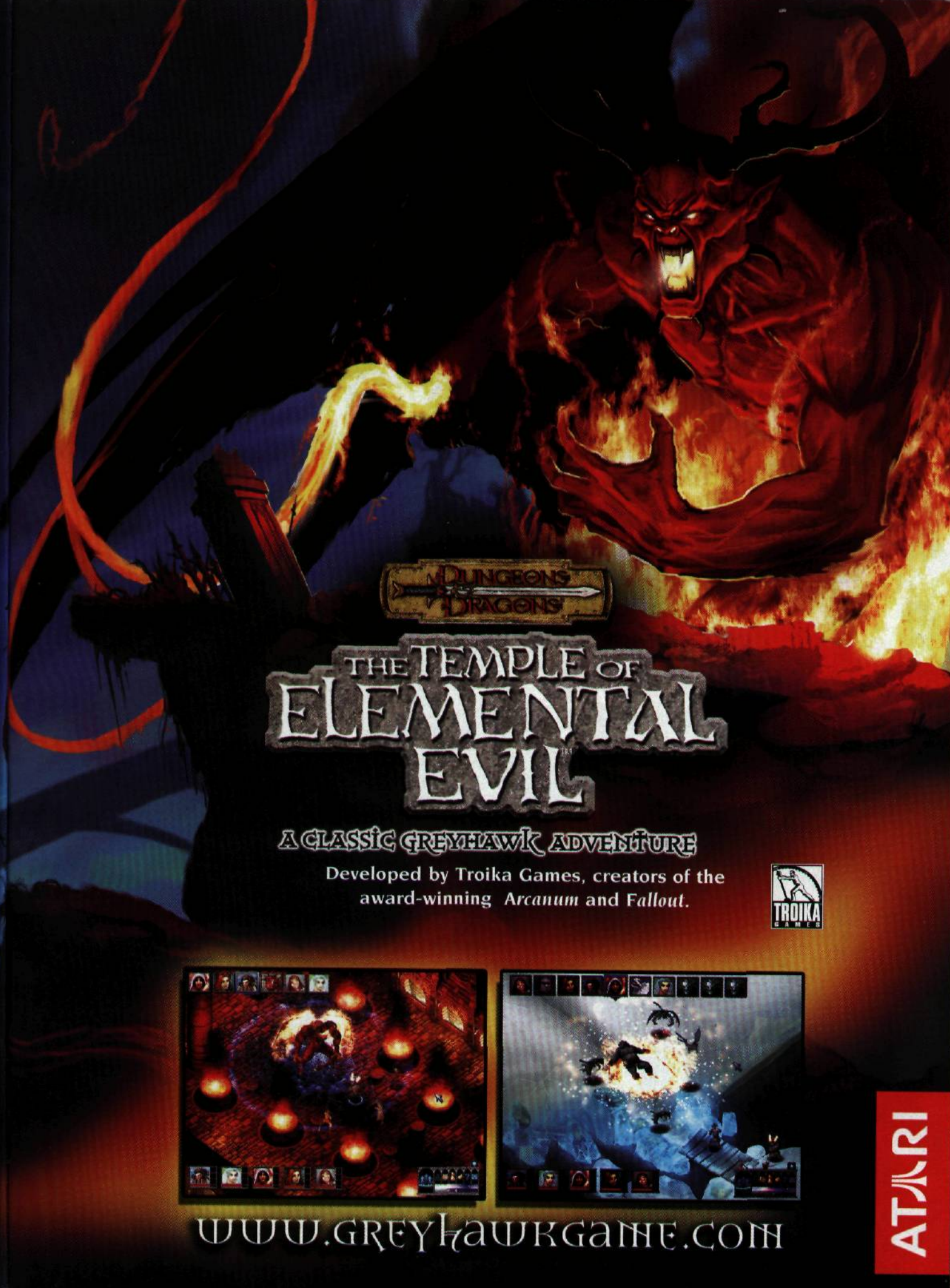
DAILYGAME.Net–
E3 2003

RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Visit www.esrb.org or call 1-800-771-3772 for more info.

Licensed by:
Hasbro Consumer Products

Temple of Elemental Evil™: A Classic Greyhawk Adventure © 2003 Atari. All Rights Reserved. Neverwinter Nights, Forgotten Realms, the Forgotten Realms logo, Dungeons & Dragons logo, Dungeon Master, D&D, Baldur's Gate, and the Wizards of the Coast logo are trademarks owned by Wizards of the Coast, Inc., a subsidiary of Hasbro, Inc. and are used by Atari under license. HASBRO and its logo are trademarks of Hasbro and are used with permission. All rights reserved. Windows is either a registered trademark or trademark of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.


DUNGEONS & DRAGONS
THE TEMPLE OF ELEMENTAL EVIL™
A CLASSIC GREYHAWK ADVENTURE
Developed by Troika Games, creators of the award-winning Arcanum and Fallout.
TROIKA GAMES
WWW.GREYHAWKGAME.COM
ATARI

DRAGON® CONTENTS

DRAGON MAGAZINE

Group Publisher: **Johnny L. Wilson**
Editor-in-Chief: **Jesse Decker**
Art Director: **Lisa Chido**
Senior Editor: **Matthew Sernett**
Associate Editor: **Stacie Magelssen**
Contributing Editor: **Chris Thomasson**
Editorial Assistance: **Penny Williams**
Advertising Director: **Rob Stewart**
Director of Prod. & Manufacturing: **John Dunn**
Prepress Manager: **Matt Beals**

CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS
Matt Cavotta, Jason Engle, John Kovalic, David McClellan, Tony Mosely, Michael Phillippi, Dan Scott, David Walhstrum, Chris West, Aaron Williams,

CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS
Ben Bova, Scott Carter, Monte Cook, Johnn Four, Rob Heinsoo, Ari Marmell, Michael Mearls, Christopher Perkins, Jeff Quick, Matthew Sernett, Jonathan Tweet, Skip Williams, Patrick Younts

PAIZO PUBLISHING, LLC
3245 146th Place SE, Suite 110
Bellevue, WA 98007
Chief Executive Officer
Lisa Stevens
President
Johnny L. Wilson
Director of Marketing and Operations
Mary Franklin
Technical Director
Vic Wertz
Corporate Administrator
Wailam Wilson

Dragon (USPS 318-790) is published monthly by Paizo Publishing, LLC, 3245 146th Place SE, Suite 110, Bellevue, WA 98007, United States of America. (ISSN# 1062-2101) Periodicals Postage Paid at Bellevue, WA, and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO Paizo Publishing, 3245 146th Place SE, Suite 110, Bellevue, WA 98007.

© 2002 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

No part of this magazine may be reproduced (except for review purposes) without the prior written consent of the publisher. Material published herein does not necessarily reflect the opinions of Paizo Publishing, LLC, its employees, or its editorial staff, who are not liable for opinions expressed herein. Most product names are trademarks owned by the companies that publish those products. Use of the name of any product without mention of trademark status should not be construed as a challenge to such status. Trademarks related to the Dungeons & Dragons brand, including *Dragon*, *Dungeon* and D&D are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and are used under license from Wizards of the Coast, Inc., a division of Hasbro, Inc.

BACK ISSUES: **www.paizo.com** or call 425-289-0060.
SUBSCRIPTIONS/CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Contact Paizo Publishing at **customerservice@paizo.com** or call 425-289-0060. Although we accept subscriptions to prison addresses, delivery is subject to the discretion and/or whim of prison personnel. If you have not received a magazine or premium, please consult with your Mail Room authorities. This publisher is not responsible for non-delivery.

ADVERTISING: Contact *Dragon*'s Advertising Director, Rob Stewart, at (425) 289-1345. All ads are subject to approval by Paizo Publishing, LLC, which reserves the right to reject any ad for any reason. Advertisers and/or agencies of advertisers agree not to hold Paizo Publishing, LLC liable for any loss or expense from alleged wrongdoing that may arise out of the publication of such advertisements.

DISTRIBUTION: National and international distribution is provided by Curtis Circulation Company, 730 River Road, New Milford, NJ 07646. Tel: (201) 634-7400. Fax: (201) 634-7499.

Open Game Content: Unless otherwise noted, this Paizo Publishing, LLC product contains no Open Game Content. No portion of this work may be reproduced in any form without permission. To learn more about the Open Gaming License and the d20 System License, please visit **www.wizards.com/d20**.

Printed in the U.S.A.

32 **SORCERERS**
They're not just from dragons anymore. Alternate sorcerer bloodlines tap hidden resevoirs of power.

42 **WIZARDS**
Monsters have been using templates, so why not spells? These new feats give wizards a spellcasting edge.

GAME ROOM

8 **Wyrm's Turn**
Jesse heads to not-so-distant pastures and rejoins the *Dragon* readership.

10 **Scale Mail**
Message board weirdos, 3.5, and what's this? *Drag* magazine?

FICTION

72 **Guinevere's Fate**
Ben Bova brings Orion back to *Dragon*. Arthur could claim his birthright and become the next High King, but he must first avoid the pitfalls set by the time-traveling Creators who seek his destruction.

ON THE COVER

106 David McClellan's spellcaster could represent any of the classes featured in this issue. This is his first *Dragon* cover, and we hope it won't be his last.

Issue 311 · September 2003 Vol. XXVIII · Number 4
SPECIAL UPDATE SERIES #2 OF 3

CLERICS

Clerics don't just have to lean on a deity to get their power anymore. New cleric specialists present new paths to divine might.

DRUIDS

Grow closer to aspects of the natural world with these variant druid classes.

BARDS

Bardic prestige classes that both capitalize on the class's versatility and provide new powers to make your bard sing.

WIZARDS' WORKSHOP

86 **The Play's the Thing**
Give your fighter an edge with these feat combos and tactics.

90 **DM's Toolbox**
Hireling and cohort NPCs can be a burden or a blessing. Learn how to avoid the former.

96 **Dungeoncraft**
Dungeoncraft's look at dungeons continues with several ways to make your dungeon denizens respond realistically.

100 **Sage Advice**
The sage tackles *mirror image* and other confusing spells.

105 **Advertiser Index**

COMICS

104 **What's New**

EXCLUSIVE PREVIEWS

22 **D&D Miniatures**
This exclusive look at the new D&D miniatures highlights the new skirmish rules, new miniatures-specific monsters and classes, and a ton of other juicy tidbits on this incredible new product line.

28 **Eberron Preview**
This is it: the $100,000 winner of Wizards of the Coast's setting search. Check out some concept art and get a first look at the ideas behind D&D's newest world.

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Alcohol Reference
Mild Language
Violence

Arc The Lad: Twilight of the Spirits is a trademark of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. ©2003 Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. "PlayStation" and the "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. "Live In Your World. Play In Ours." is a trademark of Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc.

Arc The Lad

TWILIGHT OF THE SPIRITS

...DIVIDED BY WAR.

The world is on the brink of civil war between the Humans and the Deimos over control of the Great Spirit Stones. The future of both civilizations and the world itself is placed in the hands of feuding twins separated at birth — the idealistic Kharg and the outsider Darc. Immerse yourself in an epic and tumultuous story, where half your battle will be choosing which side to take. **www.us.playstation.com**

PlayStation.2

LIVE IN YOUR WORLD.
PLAY IN OURS.

SPOON!

The live-action version of *The Tick* TV series releases on a 2-disc DVD set this month. Voted off the island early in its run due to awful placement (Thursdays opposite *Survivor*), the Internet lobby has prevailed and the series will soon be available.

What will happen to *Dragon* with Matt sleeping on the sidewalk in line for D&D 2 movie tickets and Chris camped out at his local Best Buy for the release of *The Tick*? Don't worry. We've hired a thousand monkeys with typewriters.

GAMER GEEK = DVD NERD

Check out **www.deadgentlemen.com** and follow the links for a movie called *The Gamers*. It's pretty much about what you're thinking it's about, made by geeks for geeks. The folks at Dead Gentlemen Productions were kind enough to send us a DVD of *The Gamers*. That's right, a DVD—complete with multiple audio commentaries, a making-of documentary, making-of featurettes, and a blooper reel. You can buy it on their website, so if you don't want to spend money, don't watch the trailer.

BARBAROSSA

Klaus Teuber (of Settlers of Catan fame) once made a game called Barbarossa. It was his first Spiel des Jahres winner, way back in 1988, but an English language version was only recently released. This great strategy/party game involves sculpting with clay, and the board features both dragons and gnomes—two things no good game board should be without. This game is a blast, and it's available pretty much anywhere you can find Settlers.

SPEAK YOUR MIND

Send an email to **scalemail@paizo.com** and let us know what you think about D&D 3.5 and *Dragon*. What do you think of your first glimpse of the new D&D miniatures or the new campaign setting?

WE ERRED

Issue #309 included an article called "New Martial Arts Styles" that did not include two feats mentioned in the article: Flying Dragon Kick and Ten Ox Stomp. These feats were cut from the article due to their similarity to feats previously printed in *Dragon*, and the lingering references to those feats were mistakenly left in the article. The martial arts styles that note them as prerequisites are balanced without their inclusion.

WYRM'S **TURN**

FROM THE EDITOR
NEW DIRECTIONS

When I first saw *Dragon*, I hadn't seen anything other than D&D's Basic Set. I didn't know that you could have new spells. I rushed home, called my buddies, and set up a game for the weekend—we were going to play because I just had to try out these new spells. Getting excited about new D&D spells probably made me the least normal 8-year-old in my class, but looking back, I realize that I was learning one of the most important lessons of game design: New ideas are exciting.

As simple and obvious as that might sound, it's incredibly important. Those spells took hold of my imagination because I hadn't yet realized that it was possible to expand the game in that way, but pretty soon new spells weren't enough by themselves—I needed more. Over the next few years I picked up plenty of *Dragon* issues, finding more of these articles that showed how the game could be taken in directions that I hadn't thought of.

Of course, writers, editors, and publishers try to find these ideas as often as they can, but there are problems: You never know when they're going to show up, and they're always different for everybody. Just take a look at issue #309. It was packed with great articles, but the one that did it for me was "Incursion." When we were planning the issue, I realized that I had never thought of changing a campaign in such a drastic way. Because this was an entirely new way to mess with the game, I found the entire article exciting, but I'm sure there were some folks out there who liked other articles better. A DM who had already run a big invasion-style campaign might have gained more from "Shut Up and Roll," and a brand new player might not have realized that you can add new spells to the game until he picked up the issue and read "War Spells."

One of the best things about new ideas is that you never know where they're going to come from. I think the best example of this in the last two years came from Evan Jackson. An experienced DM and player, Evan was new to the gaming industry but still contributed the idea that became the Campaign Components series.

I can't wait for the next big idea to show up in *Dragon*, mainly because I'll get to discover it as a reader again. You see, I'm trading one dream job for another and heading back to Wizards of the Coast to work in their R&D department. I'm just as excited for *Dragon* as I am for myself, because Chris Thomasson, a great editor and one of my best friends, has agreed to take my place here at *Dragon*. Chris has spent the last two years as *Dungeon*'s editor, and I don't think that *Dragon* could be in better hands. I just hope he'll give me a discount on my subscription. . . .

Editor-in-Chief

To inquire about subscriptions, email **customer.service@paizo.com** or call (425) 289-0060. To contact *Dragon* about editorial concerns, email **scalemail@paizopublishing.com**. Letters reproduced in the magazine may be edited for clarity and length. All letters must include your full name and home city. Due to time constraints and the volume of letters received, individual responses are not always possible.

Gothic II™

"Watch out Blizzard, Bioware and Black Isle! The competition is about to heat up with the release of this surprisingly remarkable sequel."
–PC Gaming World

"...it is the most captivating game I have played lately."
– Computer Games

See the world of *Gothic II* in motion at **www.gothic2.com**

RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Visit www.esrb.org or call 1-800-771-3772 for more info.

JoWooD Productions

PIRANHA

Gothic II © 2003 by Pluto 13 GmbH. Published by JoWooD Productions Software AG, Technologiepark 4a, A-8786 Rottenman, Austria. Distributed by Atari. All rights reserved. All other Trademarks are the property of their respective owners. The Ratings icon is a trademark of the Interactive Digital Software Association.

ATARI

THE EVIL CLASSES

Reavers of the Divine
By James Jacobs
Anti-paladins aplenty! As a companion piece to "Champions of the Divine" from issue #310, which featured variant holy warriors, this article presents three new variant classes for the unholy.

Thieves of Will
By Owen K.C. Stephens
They invade your mind, corrupt your thoughts, and manipulate your actions—all without breaking a sweat. Often overlooked, enchanters can be some of the most devious and effective characters in D&D. In "Thieves of Will," you'll get new spells, new domains, and loads of ideas to enhance your enchanter.

Ecology of the Drider
By Paul Leach
Shunned by their goddess for failing in her service, these cursed creatures live on the outskirts of Underdark societies, trying to make their way in a dark and deadly environment. Learn to think like one of these spidery abominations.

The Ebon Maw
By Ari Marmell
Turglas the Insatiable was once a demon lord as great and terrible as Orcus or Demogorgon. You'll learn about Turglas's powers, his fiendish tools and spells, how his devoted servants operate, and how he plots to regain his place in the hierarchy of demon lords.

Angel Classes
By Christopher Perkins
Savage Species scratched the surface of monster classes. Now you can play more of your favorite celestials using the creature level rules provided here.

READERS TALK BACK
3.5, MESSAGE BOARDS, CARLINISMS

Githyanki Doodle Dandy

Can I just say wow? Wow! *DRAGON*, *DUNGEON*, and *POLYHEDRON* were all incredible this month, working together with top quality content. This is the kind of one-two knockout punch that I'm paying for. I was skeptical about "Incursion," I admit it. I didn't even bother to read the adventure in *DUNGEON*, but the *DRAGON* article was so well written that it made me excited to go back and see what I had missed. You clearly outdid yourselves this month. I also thoroughly enjoyed "Shut Up and Roll," "The Art of D&D," and, especially, "Paragons of War." It's nice to see something on the ecology of the hobgoblin. I'm hoping "ecology of" sections will become a regular feature of the magazine again. Here's hoping to see more content (and crossovers) of the depth and quality we've seen in these last issues.

Brad Blanchard
Address withheld

Wow right back at you. Thanks for all the kind words, Brad. We're proud of issue #309 and "Incursion" too, but most of the credit should go to authors Christopher Perkins and James Wyatt. They did a fantastic job. If you want more cool "Incursion" content, go to ***www.paizo.com****. Both the DRAGON and DUNGEON sections of the website offer downloads that support the cross-magazine event.*

Matthew Sernett
Senior Editor

Game Pride?

I've had enough! I just received issue #309 in the mail, apparently from my subscription to *Drag* magazine. It bothered me when I received issue #301 of "Dra__n" magazine, but now you've gone too far. Quit covering up the logo on the covers of your magazine! I hope you realize you're alienating potential readers who have never picked up a copy of *DRAGON* by doing so. A magazine's logo should always be clearly visible, especially considering how magazines are typically displayed on newsstands. I'll even forgive the letter "g" in "Dragon" that looks like it's on crack—at least that's distinctive and unique. But "drag" is when men dress up as women or vice versa. I don't read *Drag* magazine. I read *DRAGON* magazine and I'm proud of it!

Chad Bartlett
Redmond, WA

Quibbling Somebodies

I would like to take this opportunity to send all of you that are working on my favorite magazines a note telling you all to keep up the good work. It must be very difficult to work with the constant annoying buzz of Internet geeks pontificating about your horrible transgressions in magazine creation! Seriously, I feel for you. I was surfing EN World this morning when I stumbled upon the message board update regarding a post by Erik Mona. Now I rarely read message boards, because I find that they are mostly a bunch of nobodies quibbling incessantly over nothing, but I do check them out when written by someone from the industry. I was absolutely shocked when I read the posts regarding your magazines! These people had nothing nice to say about anything. The way I see it is if they don't like the magazines, they should cancel their subscriptions. Oh, wait . . . none of them had subscriptions. In fact, a bunch of them say they think the magazines suck because they just look at them in the store and don't buy them. That is obviously a great way to judge the content of a magazine! I read your magazines just about from cover to cover and always find great information. Even if an article, adventure, or Mini-Game isn't my personal taste, I always find something I can put to good use in my games.

Did you note that I said games? Yes, I DM two different games a

To inquire about subscriptions, email **customer.service@paizo.com** or call (425) 289-0060. To contact *DRAGON* about editorial concerns, email **scalemail@paizo.com**. Letters reproduced in the magazine may be edited for clarity and length. All letters must include your full name and home city. Due to time constraints and the volume of letters received, individual responses are not always possible.

TOUGHER

Take on whatever your DM throws at you—and keep going. With over 30 new pages, the *Player's Handbook v.3.5* is armed with the additional feats, refined spells, and balanced abilities you need to create heroes that can dish it out as well as they can take it.

Pick one up and come out swinging.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS 3.5

PLAY MORE

ZOGONIA

ME AND DINDIL WANT A FEMALE ADVENTURER IN THE PARTY.
YEH.
OH?... WHAT CLASS?
WELL...NOT A PALADIN. THEY'RE TOO CHASTE. AND NOT A CLERIC, 'CAUSE THEIR ROBES ARE TOO LONG.
AND NO WIZARD! THEY'RE TOO OLD!
AND NO WEIRD DRUID.
LET ME GUESS ...YOU WANT A HOT, YOUNG, NOT-CHASTE FEMALE WARRIOR WITH A BIG SWORD AND A TINY CHAINMAIL BIKINI. RIGHT?
...AND WITH HAIR DOWN TO HER BUTT.
IT'S OKAY WITH ME IF SHE USES A BOW INSTEAD.

BY TONY MOSELEY

week. I actually play the game that so many of these message board geeks rip apart but don't actually play! Sorry. Those posts this morning really touched a nerve.

Keep up the good work, and know that at least one person you are writing for each month is going to really enjoy what you work so hard to create.

Jeffrey J. Bickler
Brick, NJ

We're glad you love the magazines Jeffrey. Thanks for the praise and for being such a faithful reader.

You're lucky to play so regularly. Finding time to play and people to play with can be hard. For a lot of folks, DRAGON and the message boards are their only connection to their favorite hobby, and we can't fault them for that.

We do pay attention to Internet message boards. Although not always positive, the feedback we find there is sometimes useful in allowing us to understand how to serve different portions of the readership. We know we can't make all of the people happy all of the time, so we shoot for as many as possible and most of the time. Our indicator for that is issue sales, and in a time when most magazines are seeing a 20% drop, DRAGON is trending up.

That makes us very happy, but we're always looking for ways to do better. A lot of the criticism about DRAGON boils down to people saying what they don't want to see in the magazine. That's good to know, but the magazine can't improve by process of elimination. It's much more useful for readers to tell us the kinds of articles they like and why. The reason behind a favorable opinion about an article gives us the tools we need to evolve and improve with each issue.

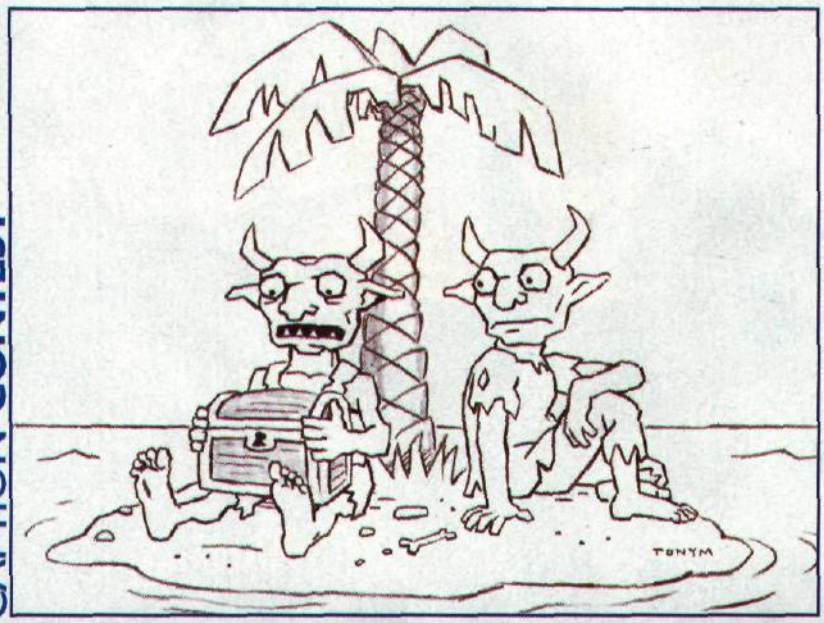
If you know of some things we don't have in the magazine that you'd like to see, or things you've liked and you'd like to see more of, send an email to ***scalemail@paizo.com*** *to let us know what they are and why. Until then, see you on the message boards.*

Matthew Sernett
Senior Editor

PG-13 Preconceptions

I have been playing D&D for a score of years now, and I was quite happy with the latest version. When I saw that 3.5 was coming out, I thought, "Great, they are improving a fine

CAPTION CONTEST



What's so funny? Why, you are! So send your caption for this cartoon to **Caption/DRAGON Magazine, 3245 146th PL SE Suite 110, Bellevue, WA 98007** by November 1st, and be sure to write "issue #311" somewhere on your entry. Your caption will undergo rigorous testing by the editors, and if it passes, it just might be printed in an upcoming issue. There's no need to cut up your magazine. If you want to include the drawing, send in a photocopy.

To inquire about subscriptions, email customer.service@paizo.com or call (425) 289-0060. To contact *DRAGON* about editorial concerns, email scalemail@paizo.com. Letters reproduced in the magazine may be edited for clarity and length. All letters must include your full name and home city. Due to time constraints and the volume of letters received, individual responses are not always possible.

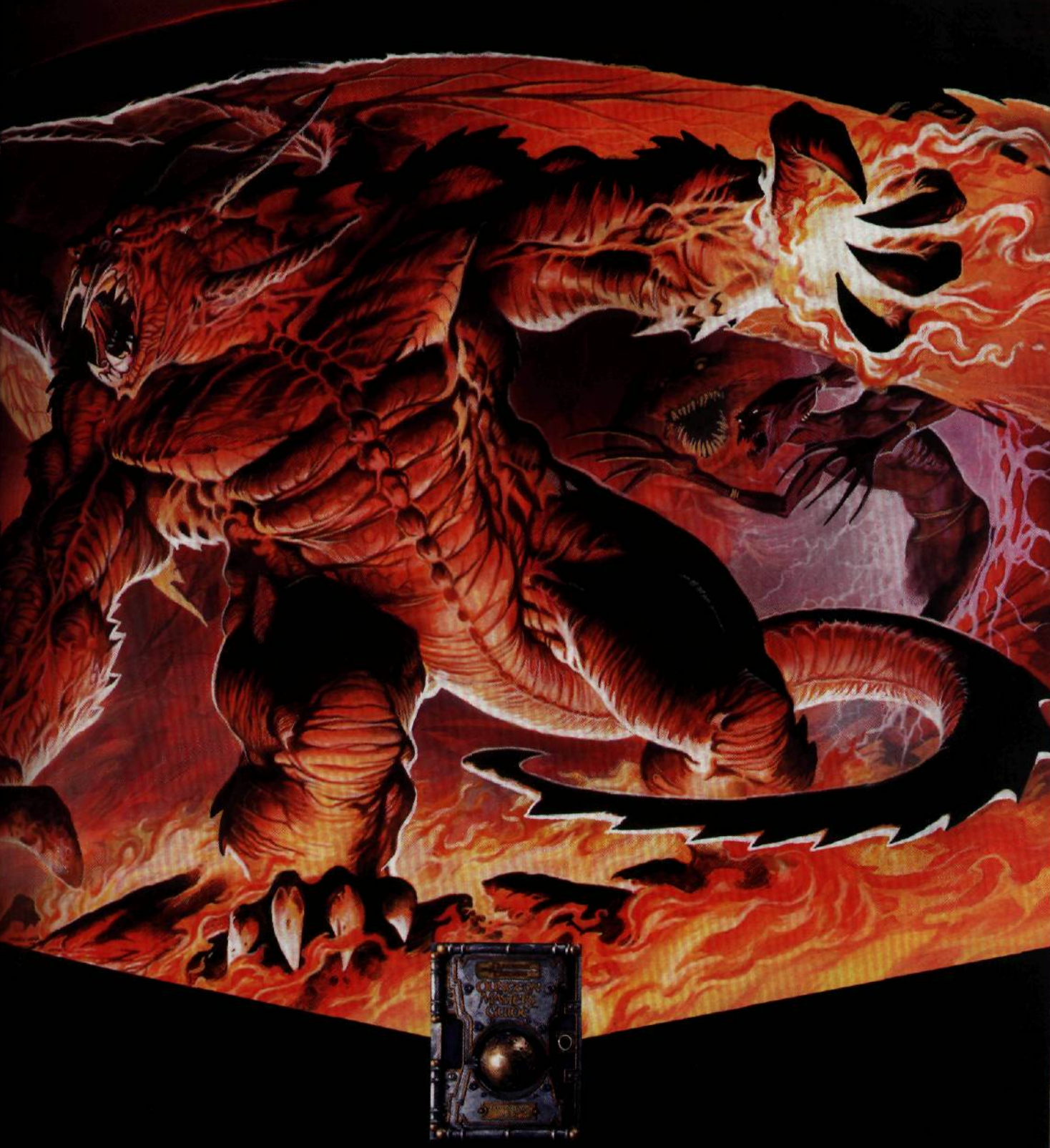
DEADLIER

Wrap your head around every creature. Play smart and play for keeps. With over 90 new pages, the *Monster Manual* v.3.5 is overrun with combat tactics, expanded stat blocks, templates, and other tools you need to make your characters earn every XP.

Pick one up and come out swinging.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS 3.5

PLAY MORE



FASTER

Find the rule. Make the call. It's all about keeping your **D&D®** game moving. With over 60 new pages, the *Dungeon Master's Guide v.3.5* provides a more streamlined reference to help you get twelve hours of gaming in a ten-hour session.

Pick one up and come out swinging.

Dungeons & Dragons 3.5

PLAY MORE

DUNGEON #103

Dungeon

Glacial Inferno
By Kent Ertman
A mysterious fire-obsessed wizard has set sights on the kingdom, and a local lord enlists your help in taking the fight to the spellcaster's volcano lair. Amid salamanders, devils, and the wizard's thralls, the heroes discover a chilling surprise. A D&D adventure for 7th-level PCs.

Forest of Blood
By Wil Upchurch
Evil has always crept among the forests of the North. With a powerful new alliance uniting the good communities of the Silver Marches, evil men plot to sow discord and violence throughout the region. A visit to a local fair puts the heroes on the wilderness trail of nature gone awry. A FORGOTTEN REALMS adventure for 5th-level PCs.

SPECIAL DUNGEON SUBSCRIBER SECTION

Sinkhole
By Phillip Larwood
Everything was fine when your heroes went to bed at the local inn, but when they awake they find that the inn has collapsed into a natural cavern infused with energy and haunted by creatures from the Plane of Shadow. Does your party have what it takes to escape to the surface? A D&D adventure for 4th-level PCs.

POLYHEDRON

POLYHEDRON # 162
Add authenticity to your Star Wars campaign with a complete history and technical overview of the Millennium Falcon, including beautiful overview maps of the world-famous ship by cartographer Christopher West. Creighton Broadhurst takes us back to the Bright Desert in the Living Greyhawk Journal, with epic-level statistics for the infamous archmage Rary. Rodney Thompson catches up with a team of hackers usable in d20 Modern, and Kyle Hunter brings us the return of "Downer!" Plus an RPGA update, D&D Player Rewards overview, d20 news, and more.

product." But everywhere I read, I saw spells, skills, and feats being watered down—especially spells. I can't remember a single 3.5 spell description listed in *DRAGON* as not having some weaker effect. I keep seeing the words "improved" or "modified." Lets get real here. The article should say "weakened." Maybe I just play with mature adults, and the rest of the world is filled with a bunch of immature "Monty Halls" that cry about the rules to you guys. The spells work fine; leave them alone. Maybe you have heard of the saying "pussification of America"; well D&D 3.5 is the pussification of D&D.

Chris Liles
San Diego, CA

You know, we hadn't heard that particular turn of phrase before. After a short Web search, it appears those of you who wish to do so can thank comedian George Carlin for popularizing that crude and misogynistic expression that he must have thought up while watching such fine '80s sex comedies as Porky's Revenge *and* Meatballs 3. *We're glad you liked reading the 3.5 preview articles, but it seems like you're pointing at the tip of an iceberg and complaining about how small it is. Now that you have the books, try playing with the new rules, and see how they help make your game more fun.*

Matthew Sernett
Senior Editor

D&D in Pop Culture

You asked for pop-culture references to D&D, and I have two for you.

In the movie "Airheads," Brendan Fraser's character is confronted with his nerdy past and confesses that he played D&D. From the crowd of onlookers, someone shouts, "I play D&D too!"

Second, in the novel "Microserfs" by Douglas Coupland, the author makes the following references. Regarding some friends' living situation: "We gloated at their decision to live next to each other, but Susan told us to stop smirking like dungeonmasters." Commenting on former co-workers: "Up at Microsoft, geeks looked exactly like what they were—nerds, misfits, DUNGEONS & DRAGONS players out on day pass."

C. Breslin
Address Withheld

CAPTION CONTEST WINNER

WINNER
"That's is the last time we play poker with cupid!"
Congratulations Leif Wennerstrom
New Canaan, CT

RUNNER-UP
"I don't think this is an option for avoiding the mounted archery penalty."
Louie Bishop
Panama City, FL

To inquire about subscriptions, email **customer.service@paizo.com** or call (425) 289-0060. To contact *DRAGON* about editorial concerns, email **scalemail@paizo.com**. Letters reproduced in the magazine may be edited for clarity and length. All letters must include your full name and home city. Due to time constraints and the volume of letters received, individual responses are not always possible.

SMARTER

Wade into combat knowing what it takes to survive—anytime, anywhere. With expanded rules for head-to-head skirmishing and mass battles, the *Miniatures Handbook* is reinforced with new base classes, feats, spells, prestige classes, and monsters—so you can really put up a fight.

Pick one up and charge right in.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS 3.5

PLAY MORE

HAHA! DINDIL— GET OVER HERE! I WANT MOLITOR TO TELL YOU WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE KILLED BY A GOBLIN! HAHAHA!
HEH HEH *AHEM* YOU KNOW HOW A HANGOVER FEELS LIKE YOU'VE GOT A SPEAR IN YOUR HEAD? IT'S EXACTLY LIKE THAT.... ONLY YOU DO HAVE A SPEAR IN YOUR HEAD!!
HA HA...HA.....HA...
WHEN THE GOBLINS KILLED ME, THEY USED SPIKED CLUBS.

BY TONY MOSELEY

WHATS IN A MAGIC ITEM?

by Gary Gygax

From the proverbial get-go of D&D gaming, many players seemed to place undue importance on magic items. Sure, they are great to have, but the first objective of play is enjoyment. That generally means character longevity is far and away the primary goal for the person involved in a long-term campaign. As in the real world, what matters the loss of some material object compared to life?

When the renowned Melf, a gray elf played by my son Luke, was but a fledgling adventurer, he made a name for himself, "Melf of the Green Arrow," because he painted that symbol on the floor of the first level of the Castle Greyhawk dungeons so as to direct adventurers to a theretofore unknown means of accessing the lower mazes. After many harrowing quests, he rose to respectable rank, and at that time his most prized possession was a displacer cloak. With that magical garment he felt confident, played boldly, and did well despite his relatively tender years. That by then he was a veteran with over five years adventuring experience by no means made up for the lack of actual life experience and wisdom that only age bestows upon most of us. Being in his early teens, he made many youthful mistakes, and that was appropriate for a young elf PC.

As was usual, I accommodated solo adventuring whenever I had free time to DM and a player wishing to do so. One afternoon Luke asked me if Melf could do some wilderness exploration, and of course I was willing. As Melf was relatively high-level in magic use (around 6th at the time) and strong in fighting (7th level), and possessed a few decent magic items, Luke sent his character forth alone into the unexplored regions without trepidation. One thing he had learned was that flight in the face of danger that appeared overwhelming was no disgrace. After several encounters in which the elf was victorious without much real difficulty, Melf came upon the lair of a chimera.

Although by this point he was pretty much out of useful spells, Melf decided he could manage the monster in melee combat. Of course, as he advanced to attack the monster, the chimera used its breath weapon. Melf failed his saving throw, and in the subsequent checks, so did his prized displacer cloak. That loss was stunning to Luke, but he assailed the offending chimera, killed it with his sword, and then sought compensating treasure in the creature's den. Alas, there was little of that. Young Melf was distraught and actually considered giving up adventuring! At that point the DM gave fatherly advice that applies to all: What matters the loss of even many precious magic items when your character is alive and well? After all, the investment of time and effort is bound up in that game persona, not the magical adjuncts he uses. At that Luke took heart and carried on.

In time Melf attained 10th level as a fighter, and 12th level as a magic-user, the maximums for the gray elf race. Then he gained an ioun stone that bumped him up to 13th level as a mage. Such a PC was considered powerful even in my long-running Greyhawk campaign, so when he encountered Mordenkainen he was asked to become a member of the Red Rampart Guards.

The first moral here is that despairing over lost possessions is unconscionable when the character that gained them is alive, well, and able to adventure to gain more. Only when that lesson was well in his mind did I dare mention the "Trail of Displacer Cloak Ashes and Elven Tears" that became a landmark in a certain wilderness area. The second moral is that all DMs love to rub it in. D

To inquire about subscriptions, email customer.service@paizo.com or call (425) 289-0060. To contact *Dragon* about editorial concerns, email scalemail@paizo.com. Letters reproduced in the magazine may be edited for clarity and length. All letters must include your full name and home city. Due to time constraints and the volume of letters received, individual responses are not always possible.

16 randomized minis & more

8 randomized minis

EASIER

No glue. No paint. Open a box and jump into battle. With **Dungeons & Dragons®** Miniatures, you get pre-assembled, pre-painted, randomized plastic minis, all statted up and ready for action. So you know where you stand—and where your enemies will fall.

Pick them up and roll for initiative.

Dungeons & Dragons 3.5

PLAY MORE

SNEAK PREVIEW
D&D Mi

The official D&D Miniatures line of prepainted plastic miniatures debuts in September, 2003 with the release of *Harbinger*, the first eighty-miniature set. Additional miniatures will be sold in randomized expansion packs containing eight miniatures each.

D&D Miniatures isn't separate from the D&D game—we've chosen the miniatures to support D&D roleplaying sessions as well as skirmishes and mass battles. Want a cleric of Yondalla? A wild elf barbarian? How about a displacer beast or a bearded devil? We've got them all, and you can have them soon.

You'll find that this product line has many applications to D&D gaming. The rules and information provided allow you to use the D&D miniatures any way you like.

HARBINGER OF THINGS TO COME

D&D 3.5 was written with the knowledge that a lot of players and DMs like to use miniatures during play. As the years go by, the new miniatures line will provide D&D players with the PCs, NPCs, and monsters they'll want most for their roleplaying sessions.

Harbinger, the first D&D Miniatures set, could have been called the Core Set. All but one of the *Harbinger* miniatures are straight out of the three core books, although we're far from finished with the goodies the core has to offer. Future expansions will also introduce creatures from the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*, Dragonlance, and Eberron, the new D&D campaign setting. The philosophy of the miniatures line is that these worlds are *all* D&D, thus miniatures based upon them are potentially useful to any DM or player. If you don't like a certain creature's concept, you can always use the miniature for something you like better. But if you *do* like a particular miniature for its concept, you're in luck, because the new D&D Miniatures have double-sided stat cards. One side lists its abilities in the streamlined skirmish system; the other side shows the mini's concept sketch and provides the creature's D&D statistics.

After *Harbinger*, we'll release several sixty-miniature sets. The first expansion set is *Dragoneye*, which is due to come out around November of 2003, shortly after the release of the *Draconomicon* D&D hardcover book. You can probably guess what's unique about this set—dragons! The set is made for D&D, so it will include dragons of all sizes, alignments, and challenge ratings. The *Draconomicon* isn't the only new D&D book getting special attention in the miniatures line. We're also working on miniatures based on prestige classes from *The Complete Warrior*, classes and monsters from the *Miniatures Handbook*, and even a couple of scaly visitors from Dragonlance.

THE SKIRMISH GAME

The D&D Miniatures Entry Pack is the best way to get a number of useful miniatures and game aids, whether you're playing straight up D&D or you want to play the skirmish game. It contains sixteen miniatures, a battle grid (bigger than the one in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*), eight terrain tiles, and a 40-page rulebook for playing head-to-head skirmish battles on the battle grid.

The D&D Miniatures Entry Pack turns D&D into a tactical miniatures

niatures

by Rob Heinsoo & Jonathan Tweet · cartography by Christopher West

game by adding rules for command and morale. You can always count on your player character to keep fighting despite life-threatening wounds whenever you like, but you can't count on the creatures in your skirmish warband to do the same, especially if they're not properly commanded.

Commanders control any allies within line of sight or within 6 squares of themselves. They also have commander effects that allow them to grant bonuses to followers within 6 squares. Commanders are useful for maneuvering your warband and rallying routing creatures, but they lack the pure offensive power of followers such as the troll, hound archon, and displacer beast.

What does the skirmish system offer that the core D&D game doesn't? In a word: less. Core D&D is designed so that each player controls all facets of one multidimensional character's status and actions. If your group has no problem using the regular D&D rules to stage free-for-all battles involving a dozen combatants with varying special abilities on each side, just find the role-playing stats on the stat card and go to it. But if you want to play such battles faster, with more players, and with rules meant for miniatures rather than role-play, the skirmish system offers a streamlined set of D&D rules that emphasizes tactics and fun over record-keeping and special-case rules.

For the skirmish game, the miniatures are divided into four factions. We used the four corner alignments as the basis for our skirmish factions. Each of these four alignments has strengths that separate it from its foes. These advantages are reflected in the point costs of the miniatures and in the specific bonuses granted by commanders. For example, Lawful Good creatures tend to have high AC, lots of access to healing, slow movement, and excellent commanders who give them the best morale. Chaotic Good creatures are fast, and they have the best ranged attacks as well as excellent ranged spellcasting. Chaotic Evil creatures excel at inflicting damage in melee, and Lawful Evil creatures are more likely to hit with their attacks.

These four factions don't mesh precisely with the D&D versions of the creatures in terms of alignment. We assigned factions based on the group a given creature would be most likely to fight alongside, not strictly on its D&D alignment. For instance, although an owlbear is neutral in D&D, we couldn't see it fighting alongside paladins or arcane archers, so we assigned its factions as Lawful Evil/Chaotic Evil.

ORGANIZED PLAY

The RPGA Network will be focusing on using D&D Miniatures in roleplaying for upcoming events. Organized Play leagues and tournaments will focus on head-to-head D&D skirmishes. But there's also another way you can use D&D miniatures: a mass battle game.

MASS BATTLES AND THE MINIATURES HANDBOOK

The mass battle rules will appear in the *Miniatures Handbook* this November. Topics include formed and unformed units, spell effects, morale, and how to convert PCs into mass battle characters.

Skirmish and mass battle players aren't the only people who'll want the *Miniatures Handbook*. In the process of converting to a 3-D miniatures vision of

D&D, we thought of dozens of monsters and classes for which we wanted to do miniatures, but we didn't have access to them through other D&D products. So we used the *Miniatures Handbook* to introduce them. The book presents seven prestige classes and four 20-level classes we want to do miniatures for, as well as monsters, spells, feats, and magic items that work well with both miniatures play and roleplaying.

For instance, we wanted to put a D&D spin on the familiar figure of the Japanese samurai, so we invented loose-knit groups of warriors who are mystically inspired by the chromatic and metallic dragons. In visual terms, we get to splice wonderfully ornate Japanese samurai armor with the distinctive heraldry of D&D's dragons. In the roleplaying arena, the dragon samurai is a fighter-oriented prestige class that gains a breath weapon at 1st level.

COLLECTING THE MINIATURES

D&D miniatures come in three rarities: common, uncommon, and rare. The first set contains 20 commons, 33 uncommons, and 27 rares. The quickest way to collect the full set is to buy expansion boxes. Each such box contains eight miniatures. The contents vary, but overall the odds are that you'll get about 1 rare, 3 uncommon, and 4 common miniatures per box. Other randomized miniature games average one rare in every 3, 4, or 8 boxes, but we wanted to make it easier for you to collect D&D miniatures—not to mention easier to find specific creatures you want for your next D&D session.

Most of the twenty-seven rare miniatures in the set were painted with more attention than most of the uncommon and common minis. This extra care doesn't constitute an unbroken rule—many common miniatures actually required more attention than they would ordinarily have received based on their rarity level.

If you're already an experienced miniature painter, you won't have much trouble adding your own touches to the base work we've provided. For example, the Elf Archer is a common miniature with a serviceable paint job, but it could certainly be improved with some dry-brush work. Easy touches would include painting the bow or the feathers in the elf's hair.

The Owlbear has an excellent paint job that might be improved with a custom wash. If you're not an expert painter, the production-line Owlbear is likely to be one of your better-painted minis.

SAMPLE SKIRMISH CHALLENGE

The skirmish game accommodates different play scenarios that can mimic D&D adventures. Here's an example.

Crazed Cultists' Temple

Deep in the haunted ruins, an evil priest has set up a temple. News of its existence has traveled quickly to ears both fair and foul. You are a commander with an elite warband, and you're on your way to take out the temple. Maybe you're a mind flayer leading displacer beasts on a raid for plunder. Or maybe you're a paladin leading stalwart warriors to do a dirty, dangerous job. You can build the warband as you please to take on the challenge.

Number of Players: Two.

Victory: You win if you totally eliminate the other warband.

Warbands: One player—the defender—controls the temple's forces, as described below. The other player—the attacker—runs the invading warband, which she designs from scratch.

If you can't agree who should play the attacker and the defender, you can bid on it. Whoever offers to raid the temple with fewer points is the attacker.

Defender: You play an evil cleric and the forces defending an evil temple. Use the creatures designated below.

Attacker: You play a warband coming to overthrow the temple. Build a standard 100-point warband of any faction; it doesn't have to be good. Evil temples are often raided by crusading paladins, but they can also be plundered by marauders or conquered by rivals.

EVIL TEMPLE WARBAND

COST	CREATURE
21	Evil Priest: Cleric of Gruumsh
21	Lieutenant: Tiefling Captain
10	Bodyguard: Troglodyte Zombie
12	Guards: Skeleton and/or Orc Warrior x4 total
10	Guard Animals: Wolves x2
30	Crazed Cultists: Human Commoner x6 (see below)
104	Total

Setup: Place the two assembly tiles together in the center. You may ignore the normal rule against placing walls against one another. Arrange the other six tiles around the assembly tiles, placing them on the borders of the map. At least one tile must be on each border, but do not place any of theses tiles so that they touch any other tile.

The defender deploys creatures on feature tiles, at least two or three creatures per tile.

The attacker deploys on either assembly tile. Once the attacker has set up, the opposite exit corner becomes the defender's exit corner.

Special Rule—Crazed Cultists: Crazed Cultists are a scenario-specific creature

type—common people who have devoted themselves so completely to evil that when they die, they turn into zombies.

Human Commoner miniatures and stat cards can be used for these creatures at the beginning, although the cultists do not have the Difficult 7 special ability that Human Commoners have. Whenever a cultist dies, replace its miniature with a Zombie and start using the Zombie stat card for it. Any special effects that were active on the Human Commoner before its death (such as a *blur* spell) now affect the Zombie if they apply to that kind of creature. Effects that don't work on Zombies (such as *hold person* spells) are negated.

If a creature with Cleave kills a Human Commoner, the extra attack can't be used on the resulting Zombie.

A Crazed Cultist has a nominal cost of 5, but since they're scenario-specific, their cost does not affect the standard dark temple scenario. The purpose of the zealots' nominal cost is to guide you in incorporating cultists into your own scenarios.

Variants

You might like to use any of the following variants to the dark temple scenario.

Surprise: Don't let the player taking the attacker's role know about the Crazed Cultists. Tell him that he's taking on an evil temple and that there's a special rule that applies to the scenario, but don't tell him about the zombies. Let him find out what happens to the Human Commoners by experience.

Temple Warband: The defender can build a different temple warband. For example, she might want to build a higher-point warband for bigger, longer skirmishes.

Square the Circle: Once the attacker has a warband that beats the temple handily, create a warband for the other factions. Then see how many points it takes to match the temple with each.

Variant Cultists: Try bolstering the temple with Wolves that turn into Skeletal Wolves when they die, or Human Bandits that turn into Skeletons.

Three-Way: Two challengers arrive at the temple at the same time. Play a three-way game, with the victory established by scoring points (the standard method). Don't award points for Crazed Cultists until the attacker has eliminated their zombie forms!

Head Shot: The attacker gets only a 70-point warband, but he wins by eliminating the Cleric of Gruumsh.

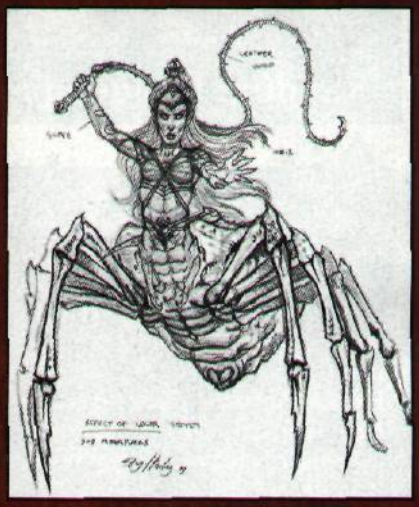
Infernal Intervention: The forces of Hell don't want a chaotic temple in the haunted ruins, so they send four Hell Hounds to help the attacker. The attacker gets only a 70-point warband, but that player also controls the additional creatures. The Hell Hounds can't deploy on the same assembly tile as the regular creatures in the warband, they can't be put under command, and they don't benefit from commander effects. They function as though they're members of a third warband, except that the attacker activates them.

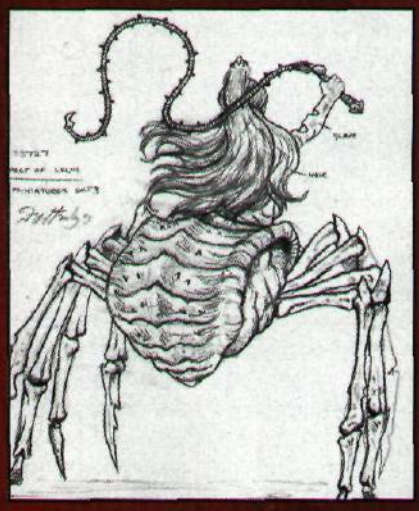
Abyssal Assistance: The forces of the Abyss want to protect the temple, so they send a Fire Elemental to fight alongside the cleric. Unfortunately, the forces of the Abyss aren't as well organized as the forces of Hell, so the Fire Elemental doesn't show up until the start of round 5. At that point, it appears as close as possible to the center of the battle grid. The attacker gets a 130-point warband in this variant.

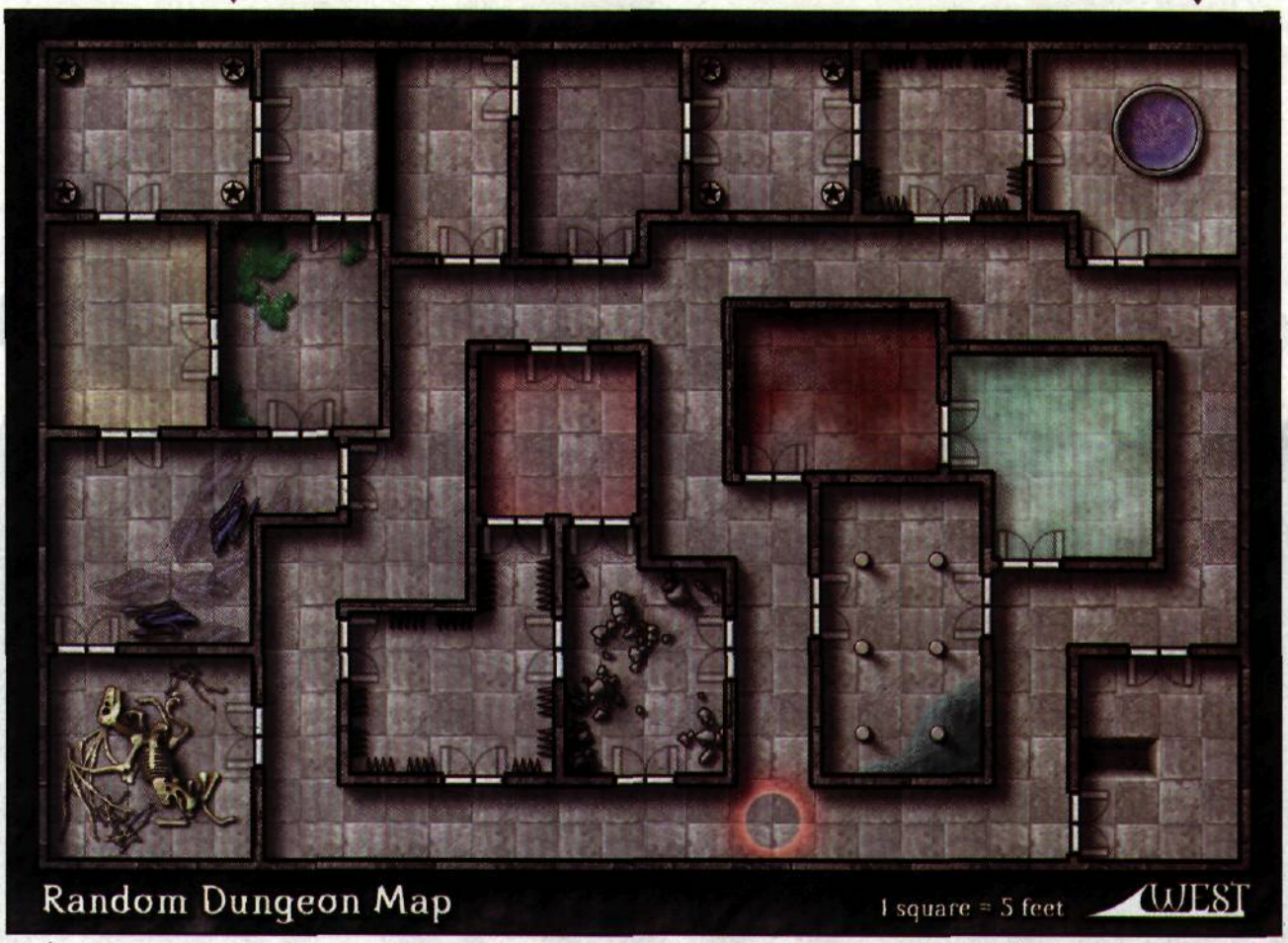
Crazed Cultists' Temple as a Roleplaying Encounter

The Crazed Cultists' Temple also works

What's nastier than fighting demons and orcs? Fighting Demogorgon and Orcus, of course. The Aspects are summoned creatures that look just like the deities, demons, and devils whose powers they draw on. Once the *Miniatures Handbook* comes out, a DM won't have to invoke a full-powered deity or avatar to put divine force onto the table. Here's a concept sketch of one of the Aspects from the *Miniatures Handbook*.







as a one-encounter adventure for a fresh, 4th-level D&D party. If you want to reduce the chances of PC casualties, give them plenty of warning and let them go into battle with their best preparatory spells cast.

For a higher-level party, you could use the temple as one encounter out of a larger adventure, but higher-level characters are likely to have spells and special abilities that let them circumvent the temple's defenses too easily. Thus, you would probably want to adjust the defenses to ensure a proper level of challenge.

The temple can be better defended if you determine in advance which entrance the party must use and array the guards to protect it. The adventure becomes easier for the PCs if you array the defender first to protect both entrances, and then determine randomly which entrance the PCs use. Be sure to place the two wolves near the entrance (or entrances) so that they can use their scent ability to detect invisible intruders.

The easiest way to keep track of the terrain and creatures is to put them on the battlegrid, thus letting the players see information that their characters don't have. Alternatively, you could place terrain tiles and creatures only when they come into view.

In the roleplaying version of this scenario, each crazed cultist turns into a zombie when reduced to -1 hp or below. The cultist does not fall but is immediately replaced with a standing zombie. If the damage that slays that cultist drops it below -10 hp, subtract any damage in excess of -10 from the resulting zombie's hp. Thus, the PCs can smash or *fireball* a cultist so completely that there isn't enough left for a fully functioning zombie!

RANDOM DUNGEONS

We had a lot of fun using the miniatures' stat cards to make random dungeons when no one had the time to prepare a scenario. All you have to do is grab the stat cards for the miniatures you've got on hand, shuffle them up, and deal them out as the party enters each new room. The full system in the *Miniatures Handbook* uses CR as the basis of the opposition the PCs will face, and it even accounts for meeting occasional allies.

We ran out of room in the *Miniatures Handbook* and couldn't include our sample map for a random dungeon. So here it is!

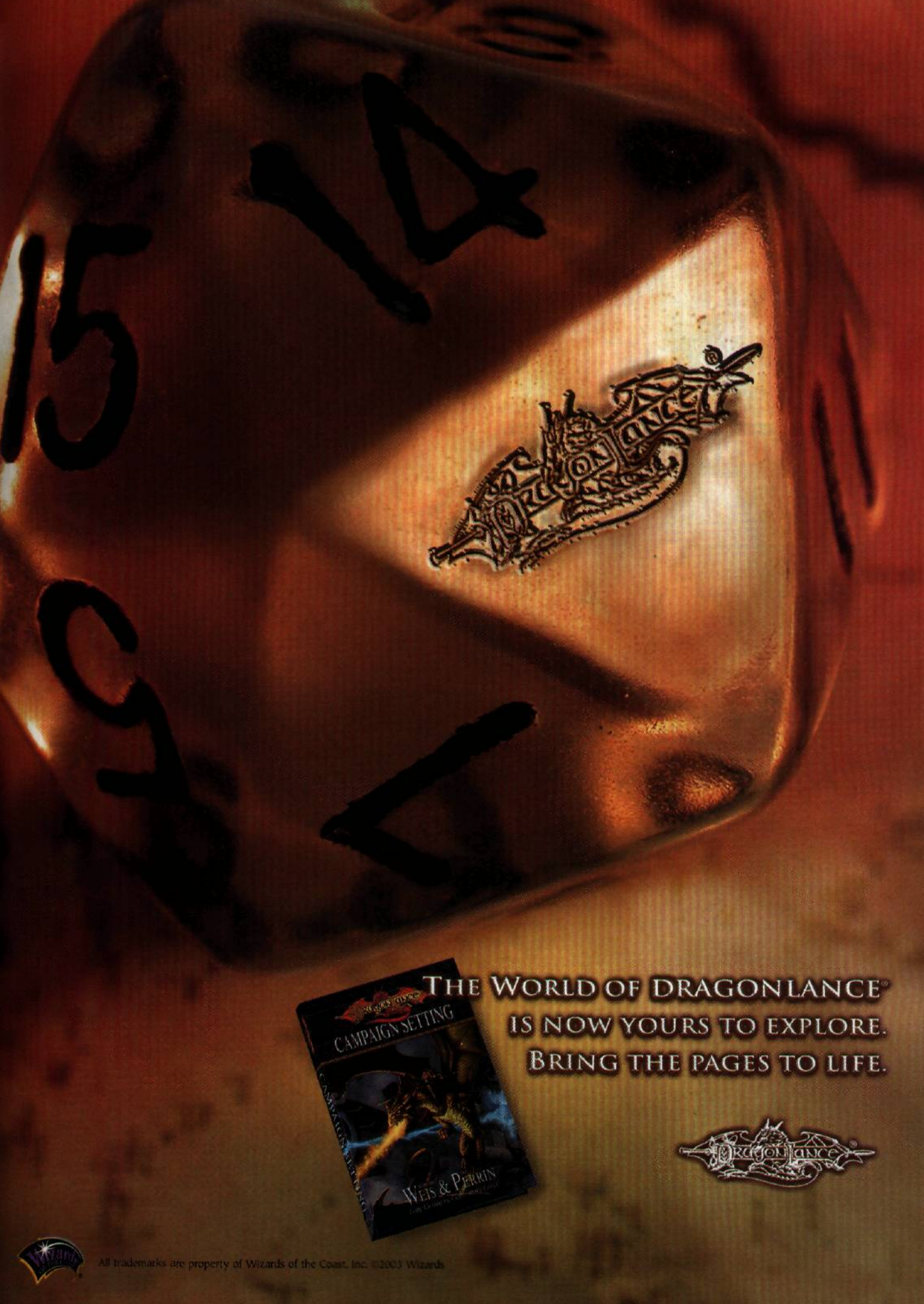
This dungeon map is designed for use with the random dungeon system described in the *Miniatures Handbook*.

Size: The map fits on the battlegrid in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. If you already have a wet-erase battlegrid and don't need the one from the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, you can draw this map permanently on that grid.

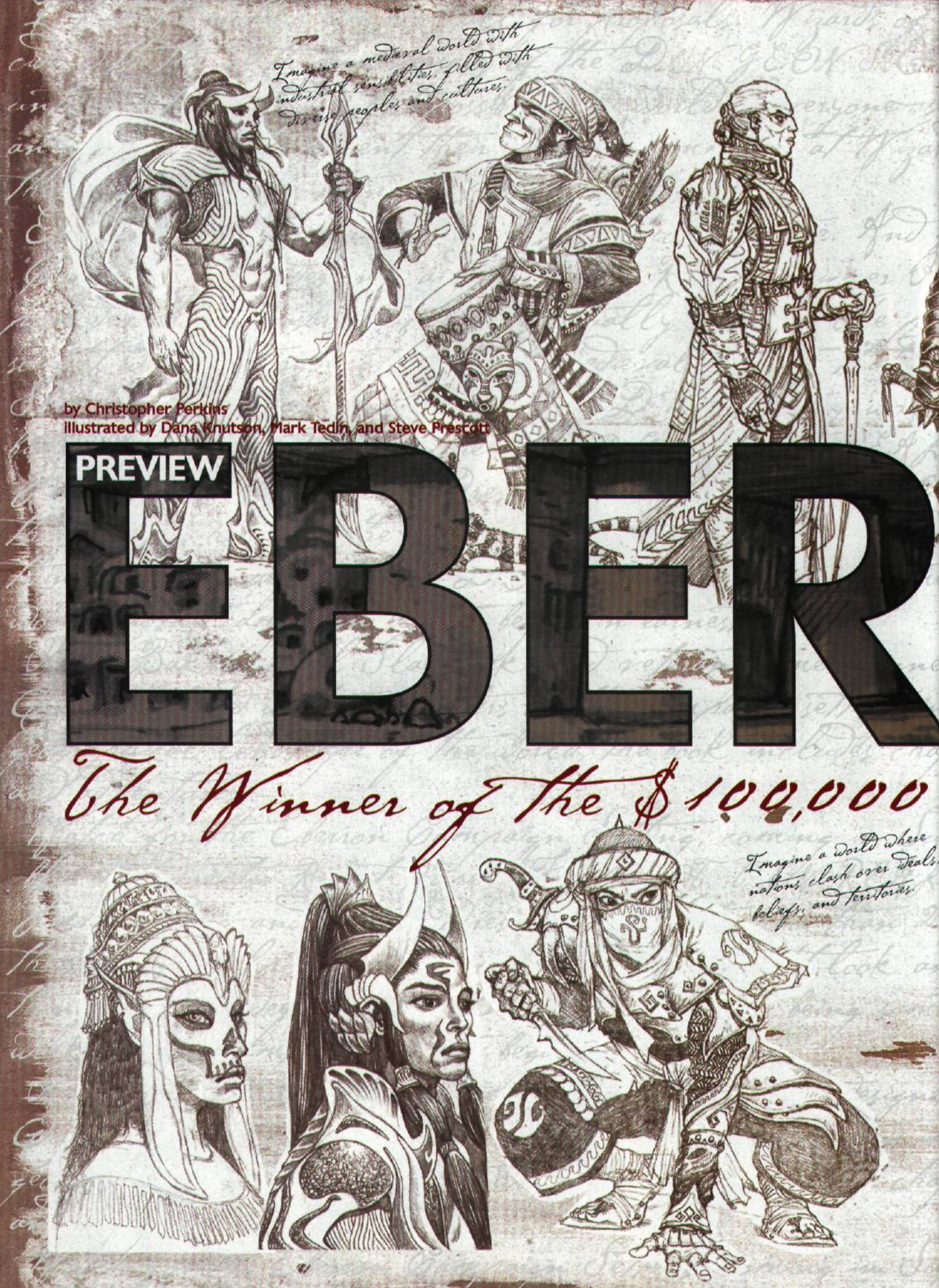
Corridor: The figure-eight corridor ensures that wandering monsters always have a way to get at the PCs. It also gives monsters a way to flee. The corridor is 2 squares wide to accommodate Large creatures.

Doors: All the doors are 2 squares wide to accommodate Large creatures.

Room Features: See the *Miniatures Handbook*



All trademarks are property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. ©2003 Wizards



by Christopher Perkins
illustrated by Dana Knutson, Mark Tedin, and Steve Prescott

PREVIEW

EBER

The Winner of the $100,000

RON

Setting Search Revealed

HOW A D&D WORLD IS BORN

It started with a simple call for proposals. Wizards of the Coast wanted to kick off a new campaign setting to coincide with the 30th anniversary of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game, and this time no stone would be left unturned to create the best possible new world. Everyone—seasoned professionals, staff members, and avid fans alike—had an opportunity to present their ideas. A committee at Wizards, surprised and delighted by the response, reviewed and debated the merits of more than 11,000 submissions.

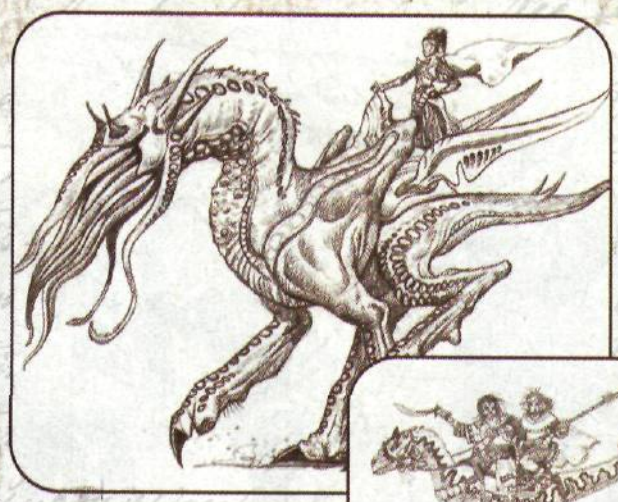
Eleven thousand became 11. Eleven became three. And from the three, the seeds of a new world were sown.

Computer game designer and freelance RPG designer Keith Baker, with a handful of d20 System credits to his name, provided the proposal that was eventually selected. The proposal sparked the excitement and innovation that Wizards sought without forgoing the heroic medieval fantasy that defines D&D. Once the proposal was selected, Bill Slavicsek (Director of RPG R&D at Wizards) worked with Keith to develop and refine the new campaign's story bible. Art director Robert Raper (FORGOTTEN REALMS, *Star Wars*) brought in concept artists Dana Knutson, Mark Tedin, and Steve Prescott to sketch more than two hundred of the setting's characters, locations, and monsters, and share their vision, helping the designers capture the right look and flavor of this newborn world. Their goal was to create something that was definitively D&D, while also being something new and different. As new sketches poured in daily, work on the campaign setting began in earnest.

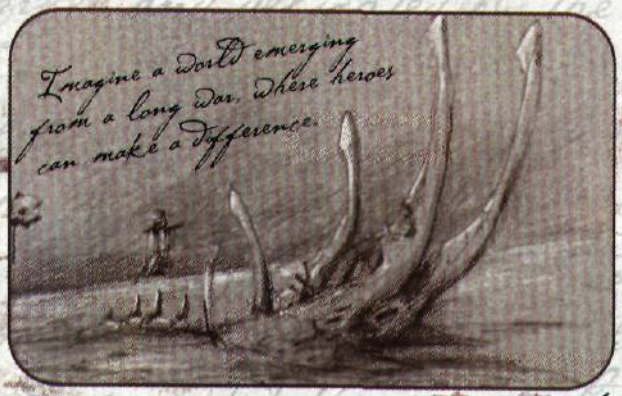
Keith Baker, Bill Slavicsek, and veteran game designer James Wyatt (*Oriental Adventures, City of the Spider Queen*) started writing chapters of the campaign setting in February of 2003. In addition to describing the political and geographical landscape of the world, the book includes chapters on new races, classes, feats, equipment, spells, monsters, and adventures.

Watch for the *EBERRON Campaign Setting*, coming in Summer 2004 from Wizards of the Coast.

Imagine a world where dinosaurs—domesticated and wild—roam the land.

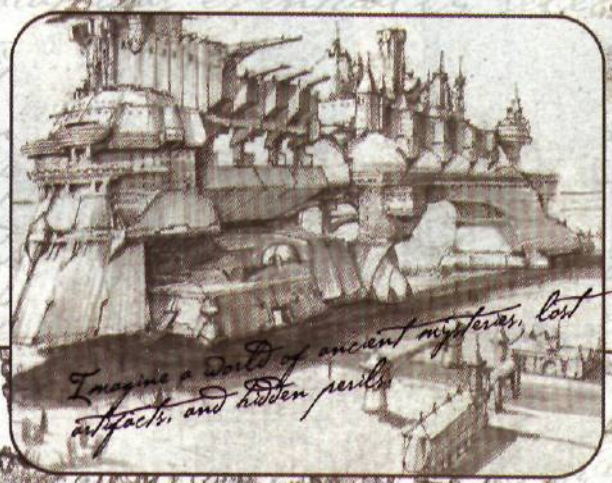


Imagine a world emerging from a long war, where heroes can make a difference.



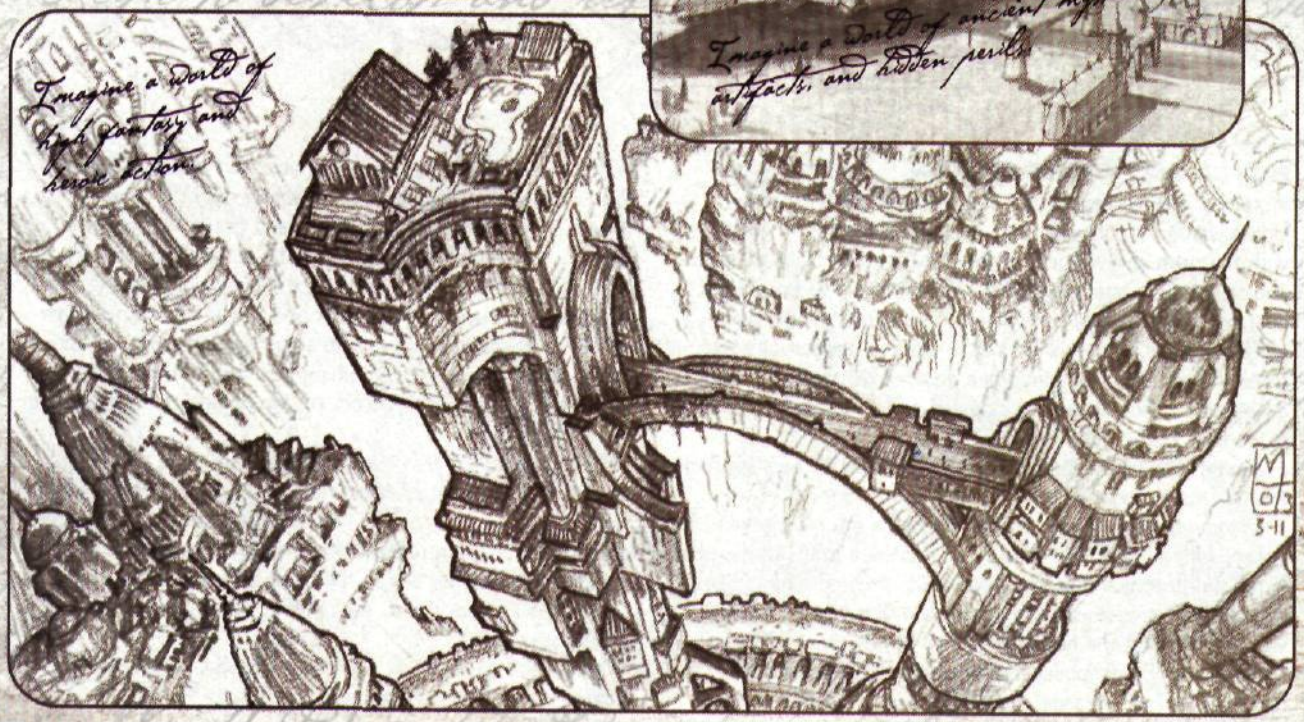
Imagine Eberron . . . and let the adventure come alive!

Imagine a world painted in shades of gray, where not every friend is an ally or every villain is an enemy.



Imagine a world of ancient mysteries, lost artifacts, and hidden perils.

Imagine a world of high fantasy and heroic action.



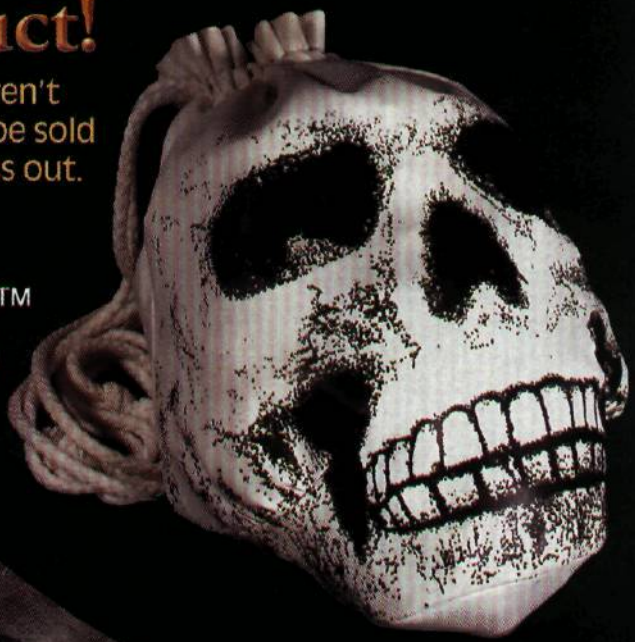
GEN CON IS THE PLACE TO BE

THE BEST FOUR DAYS IN GAMING! | INDIANA CONVENTION CENTER • INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA • JULY 24 - 27, 2003

AND HERE'S SOME REASONS WHY

A Special New Product!

We're introducing a new item at GenCon and we aren't saying what it is. There is a limited supply that will be sold "first come, first serve". Be there early, or you'll miss out.



We'll also be introducing...

Skull+Bones™

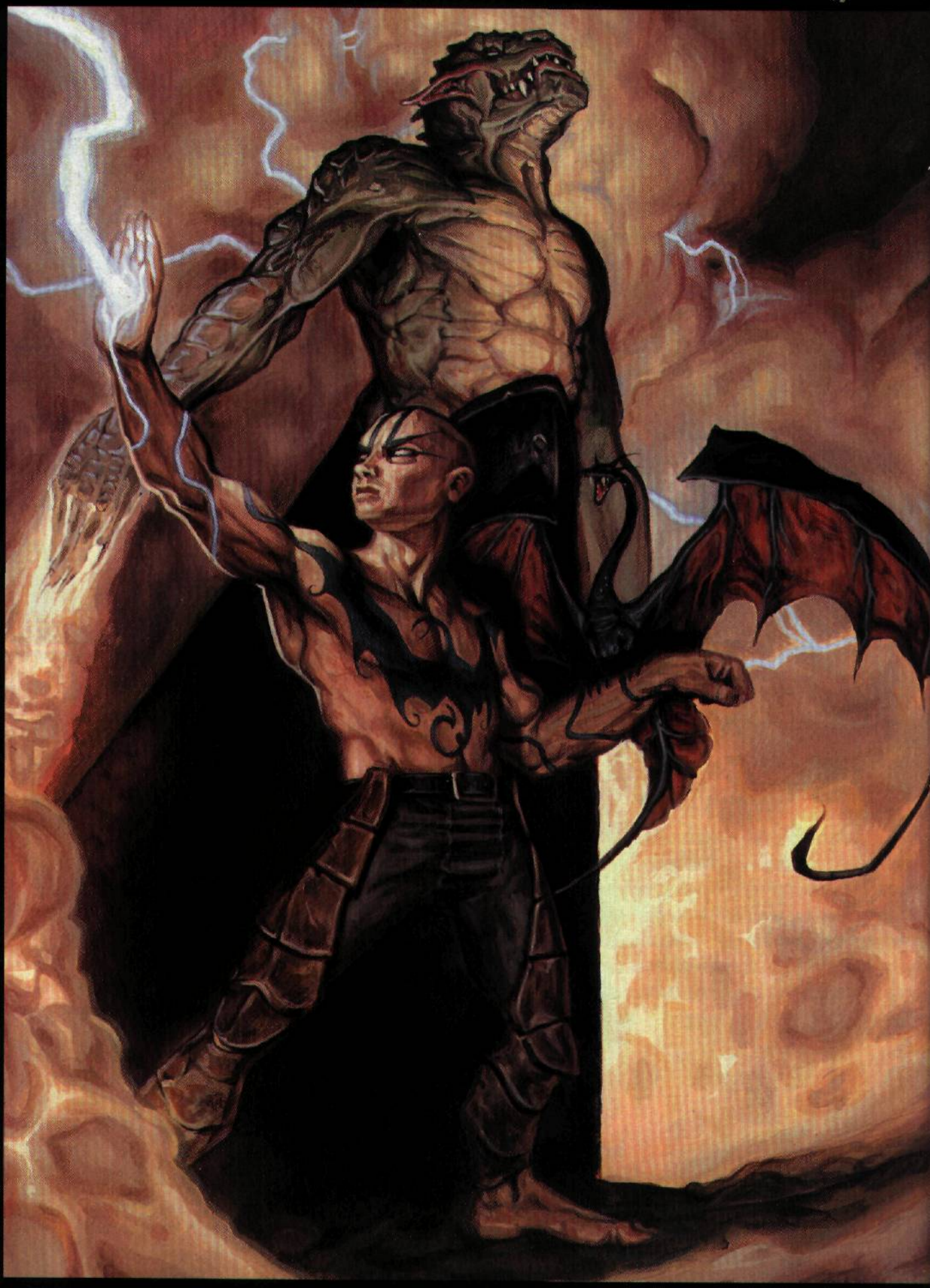
A pound of dice in the coolest bag you've ever seen!

Dinosaur Dice

During the late Jurassic period, between 156 and 144 million years ago, in the area that is now Moab, Utah, a dinosaur succumbed to the shadow of death. Over the millennium its bones fossilized. The artisans of Crystal Caste® turned these remains into Dwarven Stones®. There are only three full sets in existence. Each GenCon attendee has a chance to bid on a set. A very limited number of single D20s & D6s will be available for purchase. So, don't miss out!

Crystal Caste

In Europe (except Germany)	In the U.S.A.	In Germany
EM-4 Miniatures	Crystal Caste	Welt der Spiele
www.em4miniatures.com	1-888-3CC-3423	Dist. + Mark. GmbH
	www.crystalcaste.com	www.wds.de



by Scott Carter · illustrated by Matt Covatta

ARCANE ANCESTRY

Bloodline Feats for the Sorcerer

A sorcerer's bloodline represents the ancestry from which he draws his arcane power. This innate magical ability not only allows him to cast spells, but it also flavors the kinds of spells he knows and uses. In some cases, it even affects his appearance and personality. Many sorcerers who have no idea what their true heritage might be claim to have draconic blood because it sounds impressive. In reality, however, arcane blood can come from many sources. After all, dragons are not the only magic-wielding creatures that have been known to dally with humanoids.

A sorcerer might become aware of his bloodline through dreams and instincts, or through more traditional research and study. Dreams that illuminate a character's ancestry can come early in life, when innate magical powers first awaken, or later on, when the character encounters beings with similar ancestry. Sometimes the unique ancestor is well known in the family, so there is no question about the origin of the sorcerer's power. In other families, the bloodline lies dormant for untold generations, manifesting only at random intervals. A character with such a background might have no access to anyone who actually recalls the ancestor who granted the bloodline, but he might be able to discover it by researching his family history or meditating on his inner powers.

Once a sorcerer discovers his bloodline, he can better cultivate his connection with his arcane ancestry. As he becomes more synchronized with his own soul, additional spells consistent with his ancestry become available to him. If he chooses to continue developing his bloodline, he can also gain additional abilities based on his heritage.

Bloodline Feats

The feats presented below belong to a new category called bloodline feats. These feats are designed with sorcerers in mind, although any character who meets the prerequisites can choose them. Each of the base feats in this category (the ones with the word "bloodline" in their names) grants a character the bloodline of a particular kind of magical creature, plus a specific set of extra arcane spells known. When the first bloodline feat is chosen, the character must decide to which list of arcane spells known that the spells granted by the feat are added if more than one of her classes allows her to cast arcane spells without preparation. Choosing such a feat represents not only having a particular sort of ancestor, but also coming to terms with that heritage sufficiently to benefit from it. A character may choose only one base bloodline feat.

The description of each base bloodline feat offers guidelines on how that ancestry might affect the character's personality, appearance, and spell selection. The player is free to use or ignore any of these suggestions, as desired. While ancestry does influence who you are and what you do, it is not the only telling feature of your character—or even the primary one.

Each base bloodline feat is the foundation of a short feat tree—that is, another feat presented in this article requires it as a prerequisite. These additional feats represent a sorcerer's continuing mastery of her heritage. In addition, some bloodline feats are general enough that any character who has taken a base

CREATING YOUR OWN BLOODLINES

Bloodlines are intended to make the sorcerer stand out as a unique and dynamic spellcaster. In any given campaign world, even more bloodlines than those presented here might be possible. For example, if sentient plants abound in your campaign world, one of them might have sired a plant bloodline. Magical beasts might have produced a beast bloodline, or a lawful or chaotic bloodline might be the result of outsider visitation. Powerful necromancers, tapping forbidden and unholy spells, might find that their offspring have a grave-touched bloodline that mingles undead traits with living flesh. Or illithids might have experimented on sentient beings in the past, attempting to infuse their own traits into another race.

When developing a new bloodline feat, consider the unique properties of the ancestral line you wish to use. What are the physical abilities of the creatures you wish to use as progenitors? Do they have any unique abilities or powers that can be replicated by spells? Are such beings associated with any particular places or types of behavior? The answers to these and similar questions form the basis for your new feat.

When choosing a spell list, look at the ones given in this article as well as the clerical domain lists. Not all spells of the same level are equally helpful, depending on the nature of the campaign or world. Most of the spells you select for the feat should be sub-par for their level, and they should not be among the first spells a sorcerer would learn when gaining a new level. This tactic offers the sorcerer a bit of variety that he would not otherwise have. DMs should feel free to give a spell a cosmetic effect that makes it more consistent with the bloodline. Such alterations do not change the game mechanics—they simply add unique flavor to the bloodline.

Finally, choose a type of spell that the sorcerer can normally learn and remove spells of that sort from the character's spell list when he takes the feat. Bloodlines are powerful things, and the abilities they grant come at a price.

bloodline feat (regardless of which one) can acquire them.

The base bloodline feats are most advantageous when taken in conjunction with the character's first level of sorcerer (or another class that casts spells in the same manner), but they can also prove beneficial to characters of higher level, especially for the purpose of accessing the other bloodline-related feats. DMs should consider the spell selections provided and how those fit into their game worlds before deciding whether to use these feats. The DM is always free to adjust the spell list to reflect campaign-based spell restrictions or new spells not described in the *Player's Handbook*, if desired (see the Creating Your Own Bloodlines sidebar for instructions on selecting spells for a bloodline feat).

Additional subtypes within each bloodline are also possible—most notably in the draconic bloodline, since a sorcerer's persona and abilities might reflect the specific kind of dragon in her ancestry. In such a case, DMs and players can adapt the base bloodline feat accordingly.

Wizards have schools, clerics have religions, and druids have circles, but the sorcerer is essentially alone. His power comes from within. Nature, not nurture, determines who he is and what he can do. Bloodline feats can help give sorcerers the unique place they deserve in your campaign world.

Air Bloodline [Bloodline]

One of your ancestors was a creature of elemental air. Beings associated with this element come in almost endless variety, and your characteristics might vary with the type of elemental creature from which you are descended. Regardless of your exact ancestry, you are likely to have blue eyes and wild, unkempt hair.

The descendants of cloud giants tend to be tall, loud, and often arrogant, but they have a strong appreciation for beauty. Characters with storm giant ancestors, on the other hand, tend toward gentleness and tolerance, but they can display violent tempers when provoked. Descendants of elemental flying creatures display a predatory nature in their movements and behavior, always preferring to keep the advantage of height and distance when dealing with others. Dust mephits produce skinny, morbid descendants, air mephits pass along their lively nature, and ice mephits lend their aloof and distant manner to their posterity.

Restless and moody, sorcerers with the Air Bloodline feat often adventure just to move. They might seem apathetic at times, but they can surprise others with quick emotional displays. Such characters tend to be impatient when others want to be still, and they enjoy spending long periods of time in debate.

Prerequisites: Ability to cast arcane spells without preparation, ability to summon a familiar.

Benefit: Your ancestry gives you a bonus spell known at each spell level, starting at 1st, according to the following list.

1. *Obscuring mist*
2. *Gust of wind*
3. *Wind wall*
4. *Shout*
5. *Telekinesis*
6. *Control winds*
7. *Ethereal jaunt*
8. *Summon monster VIII* (elementals and outsiders with the air subtype only)
9. *Freedom*

Special: If a character takes this feat any time after 1st level and has already learned any of the spells on this list in the class that granted him access to this feat, he gains no additional spells known at those spell levels. This restriction does not apply if he learned any of these spells as a member of another spellcasting class.

Characters with Air Bloodline cannot learn or cast spells with the earth descriptor, and all such spells are removed from the spell lists of all their spellcasting classes.

Arcane Kinship [Bloodline]

Creatures with a similar ancestry sense your kinship, and they react to you more positively.

Prerequisites: Any bloodline feat, ability to cast 3rd-level arcane spells.

Benefit: You gain a +4 racial bonus on Diplomacy and Gather Information checks with intelligent creatures that share your heritage. For example, a character with the Air Bloodline feat would gain the benefits of this feat when interacting with creatures of the air subtype, and she might also gain benefit from this feat when interacting with flying creatures.

Celestial Bloodline [Bloodline]

One of your distant ancestors was a good outsider. The characteristics you display might depend in part on the kind of celestial heritage you have.

Descendants of devas or archons tend to be very decisive—quick to judge and quick to act. Characters with couatl or lillend ancestors are often physically beautiful, and they tend to favor snakes and other reptiles as familiars. Titan-blooded descendants are usually taller than average for their races, and they usually have boisterous personalities. The most common sources of celestial blood, however, are minor good gods or the avatars of more powerful beings. A sorcerer descended from such a line can be very passionate about his faith, whether he follows his ancestor's religion or not.

Characters with the Celestial Bloodline feat are usually good-aligned, although not always. Their yearn for adventure stems either from a desire to aid others, an innate need to combat evil, or both. As such, celestial-blooded characters tend to focus their spell selections on good- or neutral-aligned spells that aid others.

Prerequisites: Ability to cast arcane spells without preparation, ability to summon a familiar.

Benefit: Your ancestry gives you a bonus spell known at each spell level, starting at 1st, according to the following list.

1. *Protection from evil*
2. *Daylight*
3. *Magic circle against evil*
4. *Rainbow pattern*
5. *Dismissal*
6. *Guards and wards*
7. *Sequester*
8. *Sunburst*
9. *Summon monster IX* (good outsiders only)

Special: If a character takes this feat any time after 1st level and has already learned any of the spells on this list in the class that granted her access to this feat, she gains no additional spells known at those spell levels. This restriction does not apply if she learned any of these spells as a member of another spellcasting class.

Characters with this feat cannot learn or cast spells with the evil descriptor, and all such spells are removed from the spell lists of all their spellcasting classes.

Celestial Light [Bloodline]
You gain the ability to produce light.

Prerequisites: Celestial Bloodline, ability to cast 2nd-level arcane spells.

Benefit: You can cast *light* five times per day as a spell-like ability (caster level equals your level in the arcane spellcasting class that granted you access to this feat). This ability does not affect your number of spells known or spells per day.

Draconic Bloodline [Bloodline]
You are descended from a dragon. The dragon bloodline is strong in both physical power and magic. Your characteristics might vary with the type of dragon from which you are descended, but you share some traits with others of draconic blood. Like your majestic reptilian ancestor, you are proud and of noble bearing, and you might even share its coloration in some way.

Although characters with draconic blood can have any alignment, they are prone to mimic their dragon ancestor's personalities. Others often see them as somewhat arrogant and obsessive, but the dragon-blooded usually feel justifiably proud of their abilities. Spellcasters with draconic ancestors love knowledge and beautiful items, and they often adventure to acquire one or the other. Their spell selections tend toward either flamboyant, combat-oriented spells, or knowledge-gathering spells. Sorcerers of this bloodline favor the same environments as their dragon ancestors.

Prerequisites: Ability to cast arcane spells without preparation, ability to summon a familiar.

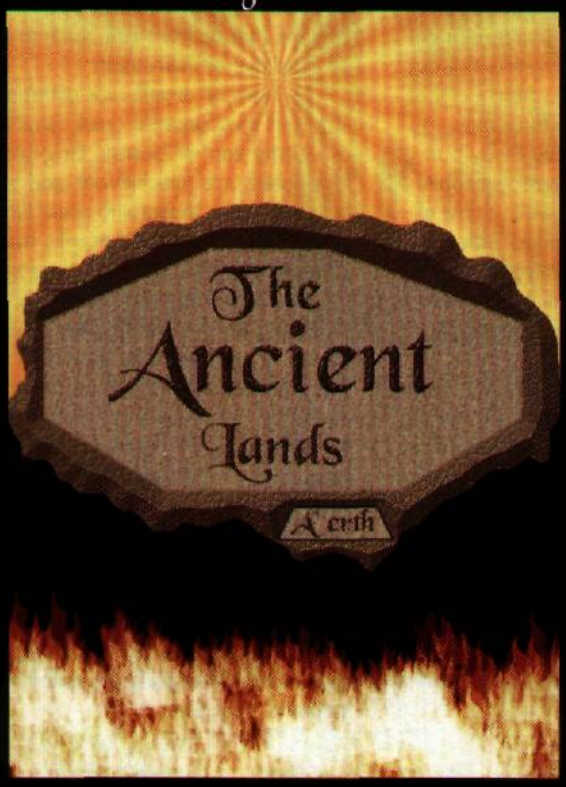
Benefit: Your ancestry gives you a bonus spell known at each spell level, starting at 1st, according to the following list.

1. *Comprehend languages*
2. *Darkvision*
3. *Protection from elements*
4. *Fear*
5. *Mind fog*
6. *True seeing*
7. *Vision*
8. *Mind blank*
9. *Dominate monster*

Special: If a character takes this feat any time after 1st level and has already learned any of the spells on this list in the class that granted him access to this feat, he gains no additional spells known at those spell levels. This restriction does not apply if he learned any of these spells as a member of another spellcasting class.

A character with the Draconic Bloodline feat retains many of the strengths and weaknesses of his ancestor. As such, he must choose a category of spells (often spells with a

The battle between good and evil begins in



Behold the Future of Role-Playing!

Now you can role-play at the "Speed of Light"

Voyager Games, Inc has created a new game system integrated with a richly detailed campaign setting which is accessed via a computer interface rather that the tradition book method. This allows for quicker access of information in a more logical way. Related pieces of information can be accessed quickly, simply because we have linked all related data together. Our rule "If it's related it's linked!" Check out the demo on our website!

www.voyagergames.com

certain descriptor) that he cannot learn or cast. (For example, the descendant of a green dragon might not be able to cast spells with the earth descriptor, while the heir of a bronze dragon might be denied access to spells with the fire descriptor.) Such spells do not appear on the character's spell list for any class. The DM should be involved in the decision about which category of spells the character is denied.

Dragon Sight [Bloodline]
You have a dragon's affinity for magic and can see magical auras. When you use this ability, your eyes glow with inner light.

Prerequisites: Draconic Bloodline, ability to cast 2nd-level arcane spells

Benefit: You can use *detect magic* three times per day as a spell-like ability (caster level equals your level in the arcane spellcasting class that granted you access to this feat). This ability does not affect your number of spells known or spells per day.

Earth Bloodline [Bloodline]
You are descended from a creature of elemental earth. Your heritage probably stems from one of the humanoid-shaped beings from the Elemental Plane of Earth, although elemental earth creatures native to the Material Plane can contribute this bloodline as well. Regardless of the exact earth creature in your ancestry, you probably have a hardy, solid-looking body and dark coloration, and you might even exude an earthy smell.

Stone giants produce long, lean descendants who tend to be shy but playful. The progeny of earth mephits are generally stubborn, while those of salt mephits are often gifted with a sarcastic wit. Characters with gargoyle blood tend to be territorial and prone to violence, especially when it comes to protecting what is theirs.

Some would say that sorcerers with the Earth Bloodline feat are unchanging, but this assessment is not entirely true. Rather, they are slow to change—not to mention tough, determined, and unwavering in their goals. They generally enjoy being underground, so they like to delve into dungeons and other subterranean locales.

Prerequisites: Ability to cast arcane spells without preparation, ability to summon a familiar.

Benefit: Your ancestry gives you a bonus spell known at each spell level, starting at 1st, according to the following list.

1. *Enlarge person*
2. *Shatter*
3. *Keen edge*
4. *Stone shape*
5. *Transmute mud to rock*
6. *Move earth*
7. *Statue*
8. *Iron body*
9. *Summon monster IX* (elementals and outsiders with the earth subtype only)

Special: If a character takes this feat any time after 1st level and has already learned any of the spells on this list in the class that granted her access to this feat, she gains no additional spells known at those spell levels. This restriction does not apply if she learned any of these spells as a member of another spellcasting class.

Characters with this feat cannot learn or cast spells with the air descriptor, and all such spells are removed from the spell lists of all their spellcasting classes.

Fey Bloodline [Bloodline]
One of your ancestors was a fey creature, or was raised as such. Fey sometimes take humanoid mates, or capture children and raise them as their own. Fey-blooded characters vary greatly in appearance, but most have some odd feature that marks them, such as a strange eye or hair color.

The heirs of dryads are often quite shy, but they possess quick minds and an earthy sort of beauty. Grig-blooded characters are mischievous and lighthearted, while those with pixie blood are prone to take their pranks too far. Characters with nixie blood are suspicious beings who tend to avoid strangers but remain fiercely loyal to places or persons they love.

Sorcerers with fey blood often have changing, fickle natures. They are quick to laugh and play tricks, but slow to forgive or forget slights. They adventure primarily out of a sense of alienation, seeking some place or group to which they can belong. They are fond of spells that deceive and manipulate emotions, such as *charm person.*

Prerequisites: Ability to cast arcane spells without preparation, ability to summon a familiar.

Benefit: Your ancestry grants you a bonus spell known at each spell level, starting at 1st, according to the following list.

1. *Detect secret doors*
2. *Glitterdust*
3. *Tongues*
4. *Hallucinatory terrain*
5. *Seeming*
6. *Mislead*
7. *Sequester*
8. *Otto's irresistible dance*
9. *Wail of the banshee*

Special: If a character takes this feat any time after 1st level and has already learned any of the spells on this list in the class that granted him access to this feat, he gains no additional spells known at those spell levels. This restriction does not apply if he learned any of these spells as a member of another spellcasting class.

Although folklore often associates fey creatures with the spirits of the dead, this belief could not be further from the truth—in fact, all fey are inherently bound to life. Thus, characters with the Fey Bloodline feat cannot learn or cast spells that create or control undead, and all such spells are removed from the spell lists of all their spellcasting classes.

Fey's Fate [Bloodline]
You are touched by the luck of your ancestors.

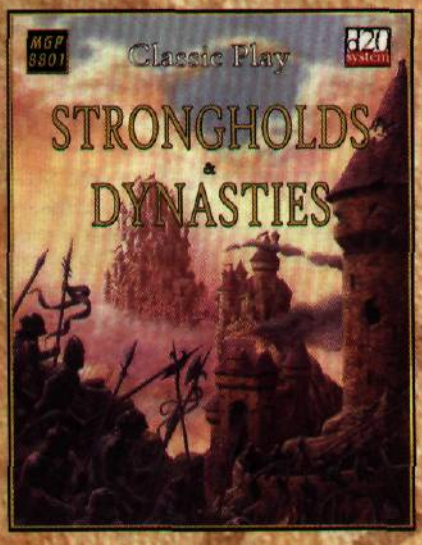
Prerequisites: Fey Bloodline, ability to cast 2nd-level arcane spells.

Benefit: You get a +1 bonus on all saving throws.

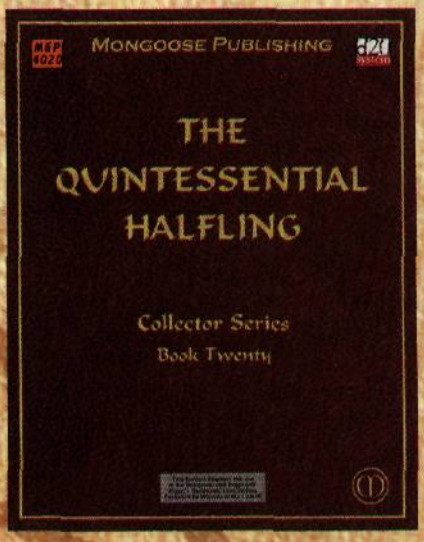
Fiendish Bloodline [Bloodline]
One of your distant ancestors was an evil outsider. The characteristics you display might depend in part on the kind of fiendish heritage you have. Many of your bloodline are dark in coloration, although great variation can exist depending on your specific ancestry.

Evil outsiders such as demons and devils produce a surprisingly large number of offspring on the Material Plane. Their descendants are frequently (but not always) evil. Demon-blooded characters and others descended from beings native to the chaotic evil realms are usually chaotic themselves, and at their worst they can be prone to greedy or lustful behavior. Those with devil-blood, on the other hand, tend to be lawful. They have no compunctions about bending the rules as far as possible, but they

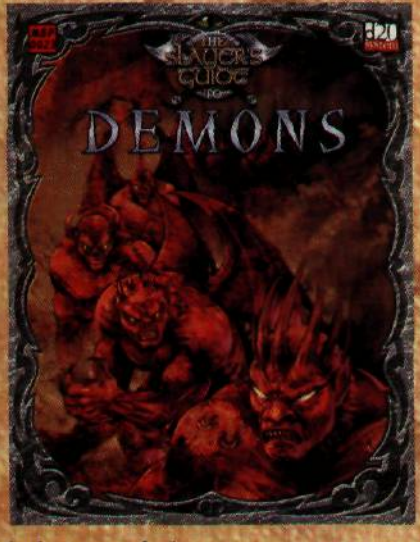
Everything you could ever need



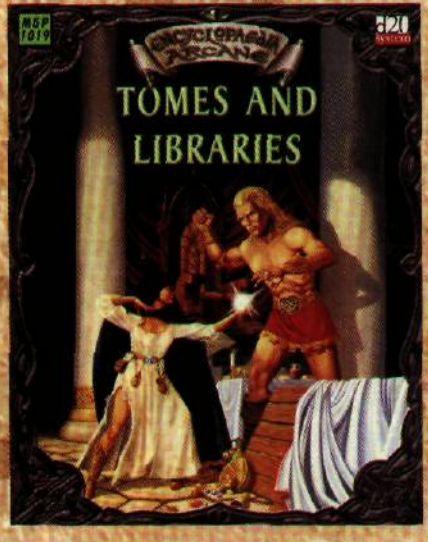
As he grows in power, an adventurer's mind will inevitably turn to carving out his own kingdom and ruling over commoners. The Book of Strongholds is a 256 page hardback containing everything a player needs to know about taking his own dominion, building a fortress and establishing a dynasty that will last for centuries.



The slightest of all folk, yet never to be underestimated, the Quintessential Halfling is the complete guide to the shortfolk, adding new options, character concepts and sub-races. Halflings will never be the same again!



The foulest, most lothsome creatures come under scrutiny with this Slayer's Guide. 128 pages jam-packed with new demonic families, their traits, goals and polictics.



What is a Wizard without his books? This latest addition to the Encyclopaedia Arcane range adds the power of libraries to a Wizard's arcane arsenal, proving that the pen is indeed mightier than the sword.

Available September

MONGOOSE PUBLISHING

www.mongoosepublishing.com

FOR YOUR CAMPAIGN

If you choose to fully incorporate bloodline feats into your world, they can provide several roleplaying opportunities for your players. First and foremost, characters need not "discover" their bloodlines upon creation. Quests to discover the source of a character's arcane power can provide many adventure possibilities, and encounters with related creatures might stir the bloodline of a sorcerer and awaken her to the new possibilities within her own soul. DMs wishing to introduce the bloodline feats in this manner should consult with players while preparing for their introduction into the campaign to see if they are interested in the concept. Once a player has chosen a bloodline for a character, the DM is entirely free to play upon it.

One or more organizations might exist in the campaign world that recruit beings with certain bloodlines. Such groups could be fraternal societies dedicated to mutual aid, or organizations with more sinister purposes. Perhaps a dragon or devil is gathering a force of near-kin to wage war on a hated enemy, or simply to control errant offspring. Such organizations can provide characters with allies and enemies, as well as access to hidden lore, new spells, and prestige classes.

Over time, strong rivalries can build up between various bloodlines, and there might be a constant (if secret) war going on between rival bands of sorcerers and their allies. Similarly, organizations might exist that are dedicated to wiping out the perceived taint of a certain bloodline. In either case, an unsuspecting sorcerer might find herself the target of unprovoked attacks from unknown assailants. The conflicts arising from incompatible bloodlines can also make for interesting adventures and intriguing party dynamics.

rarely break them. Like their fiendish ancestors, devil-spawn are known for keeping their word.

Characters with fiendish blood often seem driven—even haunted—by the potential for evil within them, especially if they try to hold to a neutral or good path. They frequently adventure out of a restlessness caused by their own internal struggles, although sometimes they do so simply because they enjoy killing, and adventuring provides a perfect outlet for that tendency. Such characters usually prefer spells of darkness and deception, even if they are good-aligned.

Prerequisites: Ability to cast arcane spells without preparation, ability to summon a familiar.

Benefit: Your ancestry gives you a bonus spell known at each spell level, starting at 1st, according to the following list.

1. *Protection from good*
2. *Darkness*
3. *Sepia snake sigil*
4. *Bestow curse*
5. *Nightmare*
6. *Mislead*
7. *Insanity*
8. *Maze*
9. *Imprisonment*

Special: If a character takes this feat any time after 1st level and has already learned any of the spells on this list in the class that granted her access to this feat, she gains no additional spells known at those spell levels. This restriction does not apply if she learned any of these spells as a member of another spellcasting class.

Characters with this feat cannot learn or cast spells with the good descriptor, and all such spells are removed from the spell lists of all their spellcasting classes.

Fire Bloodline [Bloodline]

One of your ancestors was a creature of elemental fire. Your physical characteristics might vary with the type of elemental creature from which you are descended, but you're likely to have wild red or coal black hair, and either smoky gray or golden eyes. Your heritage probably stems from one of the humanoid-shaped beings from the Plane of Elemental Fire, although elemental fire creatures native to the Material Plane can contribute this bloodline as well.

The Descendants of azers see fire as a tool, and they love crafts that control the power of flame. They tend to prefer a regimented life and usually keep their destructive natures in tight check, although they are no less dangerous because of that forbearance. The descendants of fire mephits have a mischievous nature and enjoy destructive pranks, while characters with steam mephits in their ancestry consider themselves above such behavior and often look down on others with considerable arrogance. Fire giant spawn can be ruthless in achieving their goals, and even others with fire blood see them as brutal. None, however, can be as cruel as the descendants of salamanders.

Usually hot-tempered and unpredictable, characters with the Fire Bloodline feat can also be passionate, egotistical, and unusually prone to destructive behavior. They usually adventure for a chance at personal gain and glory. Fire holds a primal fascination and fear for most creatures, and scions of this bloodline use that to their advantage, often choosing mind-affecting spells to supplement their preferred destructive flame spells.

Prerequisites: Ability to cast arcane spells without preparation, ability to summon a familiar.

Benefit: Your ancestry gives you a bonus spell known at each spell level, starting at 1st, according to the following list.

1. *Hypnotism*
2. *Pyrotechnics*
3. *Tongues**
4. *Fire shield*
5. *Cloudkill***
6. *Summon monster VI* (elementals and outsiders with the fire subtype only)
7. *Delayed blast fireball*
8. *Sunburst*
9. *Meteor swarm*

*The subject's tongue resembles a tongue of flame.

**The fog produced has a smoky smell and quality.

Special: If a character takes this feat any time after 1st level and has already learned any of the spells on this list in the class that granted him access to this feat, he gains no additional spells known at those spell levels. This restriction does not apply if he learned any of these spells as a member of another spellcasting class.

Characters with this feat cannot learn or cast spells with the water descriptor, and all such spells are removed from the spell lists of all their spellcasting classes.

CONFRONTATION®

TO WHICH PEOPLE WILL YOU ENTRUST YOUR WEAPONS ?

Copyright © RACKHAM 1998-2005. All rights reserved.

EACH CONFRONTATION BLISTER PACK COMES WITH A 72 PAGE FULL COLOUR RULE BOOKLET ALONG WITH GAMING CARDS FEATURING ALL CHARACTERISTICS AND SKILLS NEEDED TO PLAY WITH THE MINIATURES YOU HAVE ACQUIRED.

DISTRIBUTED IN THE U.S. BY :

BROOKHURST HOBBIES
12188 Brookhurst Street
Garden Grove, CA 92840
Tel : 714 636 3580
Fax : 714 636 9150
E-mail : sales@brookhursthobbies.com

DISTRIBUTED IN CANADA BY :

LION RAMPANT IMPORTS
529 Concession St Unit R
Hamilton, Ontario
L8V 1A7
Tel : 905 572 6446
Fax : 905 572 9559
E-mail : lion@lionrampantimports.com

HEAD OFFICE BUSINESS CONTACT
Cedric LEMITRE
Tel : (33) 1 55 86 89 24
E-mail : clemitre@rackham.fr

RACKHAM

www.rag-narok.com www.rackham-store.fr www.confrontation.fr

FOR YOUR CHARACTER

Bloodline feats are a great way to make your character unique and gain lots of great role-playing opportunities at the same time.

How does the character feel about her bloodline? For one character, his ancestry might be a source of shame—something to be hidden from the world. Another might boast of her unique nature, wearing clothes, adopting mannerisms, and even taking a name that reflects it.

How does the character feel about other bloodlines? Is he indifferent to others with rare ancestries, or does some rivalry arise between two characters because of the natural hostility of their ancestor races?

How does the bloodline change the character's behavior? You may choose to follow the play suggestions given in this article, or affect personality traits other than the ones given, as long as they are compatible with your character's selected bloodline. For example, characters with the Fire Bloodline feat might be afraid of water, or Descendants of good outsiders might be so pious that they put clerics to shame.

Want even more change? The "Prestige Races" article in *Dragon* #304 (pages 47–52) gives great options for a player wanting to emphasize her unique ancestry even further.

Not playing a sorcerer? You can still use this article! If the DM chooses to admit bloodline feats into the campaign, you must decide how your character deals with characters who have them. A ranger who has selected dragons as a favored enemy might not take kindly to a dragon-blooded companion. On the other hand, a paladin who is normally distrustful of arcane spellcasters might welcome a sorcerer with a celestial heritage. Such interactions can be the source of mild frictions or friendships, or they might result in large-scale conflicts. Alternatively, a nonsorcerer might come from a family with a strong bloodline but develop none of the powers associated with it. In such a case, you might use the suggestions for appearance and personality given for that bloodline to describe your character.

Fire Feet [Bloodline]
Wildfire moves quickly, and so can you.

Prerequisites: Fire Bloodline, ability to cast 2nd-level arcane spells.

Benefit: Your base speed increases by 10 feet.

Friend of the Earth [Bloodline]
Your deep affinity for the earth enables you to move across it with greater ease than others.

Prerequisites: Earth Bloodline, ability to cast 2nd-level or higher arcane spells.

Benefit: You gain a +3 circumstance bonus on Climb and Tumble checks when in contact with stone or earthen surfaces.

Kin Mastery [Bloodline]
You can channel the energies of your arcane bloodline to turn or rebuke creatures with which you share a common heritage.

Prerequisites: Any bloodline feat, ability to cast 3rd-level arcane spells.

Benefit: Once per day, you may turn or rebuke creatures of the same kind as your bloodline ancestor as a cleric of one-half your level in the arcane spellcasting class that granted you access to your base bloodline feat. You may choose to either turn or rebuke such creatures upon taking this feat, but you cannot later change that decision.

Special: You may take this feat more than once. Each time you take it after the first, you gain an extra use per day of your chosen turning ability.

Power in the Blood [Bloodline]
You can call on your arcane heritage to cast one additional spell per day.

Prerequisites: Any bloodline feat, ability to cast 3rd-level arcane spells.

Benefit: You may cast one additional spell per day, over and above your allotment for the class that qualified you for your base bloodline feat. The additional spell must be one granted by that feat.

Voice of Winds [Bloodline]
Your affinity for the air affects your speaking voice. When you wish it, your voice changes to reflect an amazing range of emotion. It can sound as kind and soothing as a gentle breeze, or as powerful and frightening as a howling storm.

Prerequisites: Air Bloodline, ability to cast 2nd-level arcane spells.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus on Diplomacy and Intimidate checks made when speaking to others. This bonus applies even if the listeners do not understand the language you are speaking.

Water Bloodline [Bloodline]
You have a creature of elemental water as an ancestor. Your physical characteristics might vary with the type of elemental creature from which you are descended, but you're likely to have blue, green, or white coloration. Water blood stems both from planar elemental beings and creatures native to the Material Plane that have a strong affinity for water.

Triton spawn often seem well meaning but distant. Characters who can trace their water heritage directly to a being from the Elemental Plane of Water, however, can seem downright cold to others.

Water-blooded characters adventure for a number of reasons, but they all seem driven to go forward, go deeper, and overcome any obstacles in their paths. Some deep-seated instinct teaches them to be aware of what's going on around them, since death can come from any direction underwater. Since fluids are so adaptable, characters with this bloodline are fond of spells that deal with change.

Prerequisites: Ability to cast arcane spells without preparation, ability to summon a familiar.

Benefit: Your ancestry gives you a bonus spell known at each spell level, starting at 1st, according to the following list.

1. *Expeditious retreat*
2. *Fog cloud*
3. *Water breathing*
4. *Quench*
5. *Transmute rock to mud*
6. *Otiluke's freezing sphere*
   Control weather
8. *Summon monster VIII* (elementals and outsiders with the water subtype)
9. *Elemental swarm* (water elementals only)

Special: If a character takes this feat any time after 1st level and has already learned any of the spells on this list in the class that granted him access to this feat, he gains no additional spells known at those spell levels. This restriction does not apply if he learned any of these spells as a member of another spellcasting class.

Characters with Water Bloodline cannot learn or cast spells with the fire descriptor, and all such spells are removed from the spell lists of all their spellcasting classes.

Waterborn [Bloodline]
You were born to move through the water.

Prerequisites: Water Bloodline, ability to cast 2nd-level arcane spells.

Benefit: You gain a +4 bonus on Swim checks.

IRON WIND METALS

CLASSICS NEVER DIE

01-072
Cold Drake Dragon

20-109
Marquette PR-1 Defender

20-983
Mad Cat II

20-504
Meta - human
Street Samurai

CREATION NEVER ENDS

06-001
S'sylaara Naga Priestess

07-001
Ivar Barbarian Warrior

07-002
Varik Northern Warrior

NEW!
FOAM DROPSHIP
11 inches long

20-050
Leopard Class Dropship

RAL PARTHA CLASSICS

CLASSIC BATTLETECH

SHADOWRUN

IRON WIND FANTASY

CRIMSON SKIES

IRON WIND paints

MONTE COOK'S ARCANA UNEARTHED

VISIT US AT IRONWINDMETALS.COM

FORGING THE FUTURE IN METAL

IRON WIND METALS, LLC • 4858 PROVIDENT DRIVE • CINCINNATI, OH 45246
513.870.0606 • FAX 513.870.0626 • IWM@IRONWINDMETALS.COM

© 2003 Iron Wind Metals, LLC. All rights reserved. © WizKids, LLC. All rights reserved. Ral Partha, Shadowrun, and Classic BattleTech are trademarks of WizKids, LLC in the United States and/or other countries. Crimson Skies is a trademark of Microsoft Corporation. © 2003 Monte J. Cook. All rights reserved. Used under license.

D20 OPEN GAME CONTENT
See page 45 for details

ARCANE ALTERATIONS

Templates for Spells

By Christopher Perkins based on an idea by Monte Cook · Illustrated by Jason Engle

The concept of spell templates is introduced in *Arcana Unearthed*, the new variant *Player's Handbook* written by Monte Cook for Malhavoc Press. Just as creature templates alter the basic statistics and abilities of monsters, spell templates modify existing spells, altering their parameters or requirements. A spellcaster who has access to a particular spell template can apply it to any of her spells that meet the requirements specified in the template's description.

In *Arcana Unearthed*, a character can acquire a spell template in any of several ways. She can gain a class feature or magic item that allows her to apply a spell template to her spells, or she can take a special kind of feat (called a ceremonial feat) that grants access to the desired template. Unless otherwise noted, use of a template to modify a spell does not increase its level.

Unlike other feats, ceremonial feats involve magic and grant supernatural abilities. Access to spell templates is just one of the many benefits that feats in this category provide. Acquiring a ceremonial feat requires not only an available feat slot, but also a daylong ritual or ceremony. The ritual takes one week to prepare and requires special supplies and ingredients costing 100 gp. (This cost does not apply to a ceremonial feat taken at 1st level because the ritual is assumed to have occurred before the character enters play.)

This article presents seven new spell templates, as well as the ceremonial feats that grant access to them. The chart indicates which feats correspond to each new template.

SAMPLE SPELL TEMPLATES

A character who has access to more than one spell template can add multiple templates to a given spell, as long as all of them are applicable to that spell and she can pay all the costs. Unless otherwise specified, a spell template that applies a special effect to a spell does so only once, regardless of how many separate effects the spell produces. For example, if a spellcaster uses the ghost touch template on a *scorching ray* spell (which fires up to three rays), the ghost touch effect applies only to the first ray.

The following format is used to present spell template information.

Name

The description of the spell template discusses its origin, effect, and the kind of spells to which it can be applied. For example, some templates work only with spells that deal hit point damage, some with spells of a certain school or subschool, some with single-target spells, and so forth. Any physical effects that use of the template may have on the spellcaster are also noted here.

Cost: This cost must be applied each

SPELL TEMPLATE FEATS

Spell Template	Associated Ceremonial Feat
Bloodleech	Bloodthirsty
Champion	Superior Summons
Concussive	Spellstrike
Elemalefic	Elemalefic Spellcaster
Ghost Touch	Ethereal Tendril
Invigorating	Invigorating Spellcaster
Shackled	Spellbinder

time the spell template comes into play. Costs might be material components of a certain value, or they might be verbal or somatic components that cannot be modified (or negated) by any means, including metamagic feats. For example, the Silent Spell feat cannot be applied to a spell with a verbal component that cannot be modified. Material components are consumed unless the component is specified as a material focus.

Prerequisite: This entry describes the ways in which the spell template can be acquired. In most cases, a spell template is acquired by taking the requisite ceremonial feat.

Bloodleech

Using methods taught by the spirits of slain necromancers, you draw strength from those you wound with your spells. Your veins throb and pulse visibly when you cast a bloodleech spell.

This template can be added to any spell that deals hit point damage. The spell deals an additional 1d6 points of damage to one living target of the caster's choice, and the caster is instantly healed of damage equal to this bonus amount. If the chosen target is immune to the type of damage the spell deals or does not suffer the damage for some reason, the caster does not heal any hit points.

Using a bloodleech spell against another sentient creature is considered an evil act.

Cost: Verbal component (a specific, guttural, evil-sounding word or phrase) that cannot be modified and a material component (a ruby worth at least 25 gp).

Prerequisite: Bloodthirsty.

Champion

You have learned ancient magical techniques for imbuing summoned monsters with greater power. Creatures summoned via champion spells appear slightly larger and more powerful than typical specimens of their kind.

This template can be added to any conjuration (summoning) spell that summons one or more creatures. All creatures summoned with a champion spell have maximum hit points. Furthermore, you may cast spells with a range of "touch" on any creatures you have summoned without actually needing to touch them, provided that they are within your line of sight. For example, you could cast a *blur* spell on a creature you have summoned even if it's standing 30 feet away from you. All other parameters (such as range, number of targets, and the like) of a touch spell used in this manner still apply normally.

Cost: Material component (a topaz worth at least 250 gp).

Prerequisite: Superior Summons.

Concussive

You have learned how to direct your destructive spells so that they strike with maximum force. Concussive spells are louder than normal and seem to strike with greater impact.

This template can be added to any spell that deals hit point damage. Any creature damaged by a concussive spell must succeed on a Balance check (DC 10 + caster level) or be knocked prone by the impact of the spell.

Cost: Somatic component (thrusting hand gestures) that cannot be modified and a material component (a pearl worth at least 25 gp).

Prerequisite: Spellstrike.

Ghost Touch

You establish a link with the Ethereal Plane. A barely visible, silvery aura briefly surrounds you while you're casting a ghost touch spell.

The ghost touch template can be added to any spell with one or more targets. Spells with this template gain the ghost touch property and are not subject to the 50% miss chance that normally applies against an incorporeal target.

Cost: Material component (silver orb worth at least 50 gp).

Prerequisite: Ethereal Tendril.

Elemalefic

You have learned how to capture minor elemental spirits and trap them in your spells. A spell amplified by the elemalefic template seems to form frowning skulls, grasping claws, or screaming faces of the appropriate energy type within its area.

This template can be added to any spell that deals energy damage (acid, cold, electricity, fire, or sonic). After the spell's normal duration expires, or after its damage is dealt, elemental spirits plague all creatures damaged by the spell for a number of additional rounds equal to the spell's level. This residual energy deals 1d4 points of damage per round of the same energy type as the spell itself dealt. For instance, a creature damaged by an elemalefic *ice storm* takes 1d4 points of residual cold damage per round for 4 rounds after the spell's duration expires. The spell is still considered to be in effect for the purpose of *dispel magic*.

A spell with this template gains the appropriate energy descriptor (the acid descriptor for an elemalefic acid spell, the cold descriptor for an elemalefic cold spell, and so forth).

Cost: Material component (worth 50 gp) that is specific to the energy type, as follows: a few drops of black dragon drool (acid), diamond dust (cold), a star made of woven copper wire (electricity), ruby dust (fire), or a golden tuning fork (sonic).

Prerequisite: Elemalefic Spellcaster.

Invigorating

You unlock ancient methods of manipulating divine healing energy. Your eyes turn white while you are casting an invigorating spell.

This template can be added to any spell that heals hit point damage. In addition to healing damage normally, an invigorating spell can remove any or all of the following conditions affecting the target(s): dazed, exhausted, fatigued, sickened, and stunned. You specify which conditions are to be removed when you cast the spell.

Cost: Verbal component (recitation of an ancient healing incantation) that cannot be modified.

Prerequisite: Invigorating Spellcaster.

Shackled

You have learned how to harness the residual, wasted energy of a spell and use it to hinder the mobility of your targets. The spell energies unleashed by a

shackled spell tend to linger even after the spell's effects have taken hold.

This template can be added to any spell with a duration other than instantaneous or permanent. In addition to its normal effects, a shackled spell causes each target to move at one-half its normal speed (rounded to the next 5-foot increment) for the entire duration of the spell. If applied to a spell that itself reduces speed (such as *slow*), the effects are cumulative. Any reduction in speed also affects jumping distance, as normal.

Cost: Somatic component (a grasping hand gesture) that cannot be modified, a material focus (a set of silver shackles worth at least 100 gp), and material component (a golden key worth at least 25 gp). Spells of 9th level are not affected by this template.

Prerequisite: Spellbinder.

CEREMONIAL FEATS

The following ceremonial feats allow access to the spell templates described above. They also grant additional situational bonuses and benefits, as noted in their individual descriptions.

Bloodthirsty (Ceremonial)

After a daylong ritual involving you and at least six others, one of whom must be a necromancer, you gain mastery of the blood.

Benefit: You may apply the bloodleech template to your spells. If you have cast a bloodleech spell in the past 24 hours, you heal naturally at an accelerated rate, recovering hit points equal to twice your character level with a night of rest, or three times your character level with an entire day and night of rest.

Elemalefic Spellcaster (Ceremonial)

After a daylong ritual involving an invocation to angry elemental spirits, you can call upon their rage to enhance your spells.

Benefit: You may apply the elemalefic template to your spells. You also gain a +2 bonus on Survival checks made while you are on any of the four elemental planes.

Ethereal Tendril (Ceremonial)

After a daylong ceremony in which you sacrifice and devour an ether scarab (described in *Monster Manual II*), you can imbue your spells with the power to strike incorporeal foes.

Benefit: You may apply the ghost touch template to your spells. You also gain the ability to move at normal speed (instead of half speed) when traveling on the Ethereal Plane.

Invigorating Spellcaster (Ceremonial)

After completing a daylong ritual involving you and six clerics, you can cast healing spells that have additional invigorating powers.

Benefit: You may apply the invigorating template to your spells. You also gain a +2 bonus on all Heal checks.

Spellbinder (Ceremonial)

Upon completing a daylong ceremony during which you and the other six participants are shackled together at the ankles, you master the ability to inhibit others' movements with your magic.

Benefit: You may apply the shackled template to your spells. You also gain a +2 bonus on Use Rope checks made to bind a creature.

Spellstrike (Ceremonial)

After a daylong ceremony involving you and at least six monks, you gain the power to knock down foes with your spells.

Benefits: You may apply the concussive template to your spells. You also gain a +2 bonus on Concentration checks made to ignore vigorous, violent, or extraordinarily violent motion while casting spells (see Concentration in the Magic chapter of the *Player's Handbook* for details).

Superior Summons (Ceremonial)

After completing a daylong ritual attended by six others, at least one of whom is a conjurer, you gain the ability to summon more powerful creatures than normal and establish a magical connection with them.

Benefits: You may apply the champion template to your spells. Furthermore, you cast conjuration (summoning) spells at +1 caster level.

OPEN GAME LICENSE VERSION 1.0A

The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc ("Wizards"). All Rights Reserved.

1. Definitions: (a)"Contributors" means the copyright and/or trademark owners who have contributed Open Game Content; (b)"Derivative Material" means copyrighted material including derivative works and translations (including into other computer languages), potation, modification, correction, addition, extension, upgrade, improvement, compilation, abridgment or other form in which an existing work may be recast, transformed or adapted; (c) "Distribute" means to reproduce, license, rent, lease, sell, broadcast, publicly display, transmit or otherwise distribute; (d)"Open Game Content" means the game mechanic and includes the methods, procedures, processes and routines to the extent such content does not embody the Product Identity and is an enhancement over the prior art and any additional content clearly identified as Open Game Content by the Contributor, and means any work covered by this License, including translations and derivative works under copyright law, but specifically excludes Product Identity. (e) "Product Identity" means product and product line names, logos and identifying marks including trade dress; artifacts; creatures characters; stories, storylines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, artwork, symbols, designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual or audio representations; names and descriptions of characters, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses and special abilities; places, locations, environments, creatures, equipment, magical or supernatural abilities or effects, logos, symbols, or graphic designs; and any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as Product Identity by the owner of the Product Identity and which specifically excludes the Open Game Content; (f) "Trademark" means the logos, names, mark, sign, motto, designs that are used by a Contributor to identify itself or its products or the associated products contributed to the Open Game License by the Contributor (g) "Use", "Used" or "Using" means to use, Distribute, copy, edit, format, modify, translate and otherwise create Derivative Material of Open Game Content. (h) "You" or "Your" means the licensee in terms of this agreement.

2. The License: This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content may only be Used under and in terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License.

3. Offer and Acceptance: By Using the Open Game Content You indicate Your acceptance of the terms of this License.

4. Grant and Consideration: In consideration for agreeing to use this License, the Contributors grant You a perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free, non-exclusive license with the exact terms of this License to Use, the Open Game Content.

5. Representation of Authority to Contribute: If You are contributing original material as Open Game Content, You represent that Your Contributions are Your original creation and/or You have sufficient rights to grant the rights conveyed by this License.

6. Notice of License Copyright: You must update the COPYRIGHT NOTICE portion of this License to include the exact text of the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any Open Game Content You are copying, modifying or distributing, and You must add the title, the copyright date, and the copyright holder's name to the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any original Open Game Content you Distribute.

7. Use of Product Identity: You agree not to Use any Product Identity, including as an indication as to compatibility, except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of each element of that Product Identity. You agree not to indicate compatibility or co-adaptability with any Trademark or Registered Trademark in conjunction with a work containing Open Game Content except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of such Trademark or Registered Trademark. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity.

8. Identification: If you distribute Open Game Content You must clearly indicate which portions of the work that you are distributing are Open Game Content.

9. Updating the License: Wizards or its designated Agents may publish updated versions of this License. You may use any authorized version of this License to copy, modify and distribute any Open Game Content originally distributed under any version of this License.

10 Copy of this License: You MUST include a copy of this License with every copy of the Open Game Content You Distribute.

11. Use of Contributor Credits: You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do so.

12. Inability to Comply: If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order, or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so affected.

13. Termination: This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License.

14. Reformation: If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.

15. COPYRIGHT NOTICE

Open Game License v 1.0 Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

Faces of Faith

Variant Cleric Concepts

by Ari Marmell · illustrated by Dan Scott

Religion is one of the primary defining factors in any culture. It influences behavior, attitudes, art, the making of war, the making of peace—and, in most D&D campaign settings, reactions to magic, monsters, and adventurers. In most cases and most campaigns, the cleric class as presented in the *Player's Handbook* is perfectly suited to representing the warriors, teachers, and servants of those faiths. Not all priests or deities are alike, of course, but between domain choices and prestige classes, the core cleric accommodates nearly all manner of the faithful.

Occasionally, however, the cleric class is almost right for a character, but not quite. Shouldn't a cleric who serves as an officer in a theocracy focus on different sorts of abilities than an adventurer? Wouldn't a priest who worships his tribe's ancestors manifest his powers differently than one who calls upon a deity? In such cases, perhaps what you're looking for is a specialist cleric.

Shared Rules

As the classes given here are all derivates of the cleric, they possess many traits and features in common with the standard cleric class. Unless otherwise noted, a specialist cleric advances as a normal cleric and shares the following traits:

- Levels of specialist cleric count as levels of a standard cleric in terms of spellcasting ability, qualification for feats and prestige classes, and the like. A character must choose upon first becoming a cleric whether to be a core cleric or one of these variations. Once the choice is made it cannot be changed or unmade, and the character may not later multiclass into the core cleric or a different variant cleric.
- Specialist clerics share the standard cleric's aura and the restrictions against casting spells of an opposed alignment.
- Specialist clerics have the alignment restrictions of the cleric; that is, a specialist cleric's alignment must fall within one step of her deity's.
- Except in the case of the evangelist, specialist clerics cast divine spells, based on Wisdom, and they must prepare their spells like normal clerics. They cast spells from the cleric spell list. They gain the same number of spells per day, but they do not receive the extra domain spell at each spell level.
- Unlike standard clerics, specialist clerics do not gain the ability to spontaneously cast *cure* or *inflict* spells.
- Except in the case of the evangelist, specialist clerics do not gain domains, either the special abilities or additional spells.
- Specialist clerics do not have the ability to turn undead.

Ancestral Speaker

Many cultures, both primitive and surprisingly advanced, give their religious devotion not to deities (or at least not solely to deities), but to the spirits of their departed ancestors. An ancestral speaker calls upon his forebears, and the deceased patriarchs and matriarchs

of his clan, family, or nation, for spells and guidance. Unlike standard clerics, whose first devotion is often to their priesthood, an ancestral speaker serves and protects the honor of his ancestors and the well-being of his people with equal fervor. They are, after all, essentially the same thing; his people today are the family of those who have gone, and they themselves will one day be the ancestor spirits to following generations.

Hit Die: d8.

Class Skills

The ancestral speaker's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (history) (Int), Knowledge (local) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), and Spellcraft (Int). Further, an ancestral speaker may choose any two cross-class skills to become class skills; these were taught to him by his ancestors during communion over the course of his training to become an ancestral speaker.

Skill Points at 1st Level: (4 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the ancestral speaker.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The ancestral speaker is proficient with all simple weapons, with light and medium armor, and with shields (except tower shields).

Ancestral Communion (Ex): In addition to spells, the ancestral speaker may pray to his ancestors for advice or knowledge. At 1st level, the ancestral speaker may request a bonus on any one specific skill, once per day. The ancestors grant him temporary knowledge of that skill, bestowing a competence bonus equal to the ancestral speaker's Charisma modifier plus his class level. It does not matter if the speaker already possesses any ranks in this skill or not; the ancestral speaker can use the skill even if he is untrained in its use or cannot normally use it. The bonus lasts for a number of rounds equal to 1 plus the ancestral speaker's Charisma bonus. At 5th level and every 5 levels thereafter, the ancestral speaker may use this power an additional time per day.

At 9th level, the ancestral speaker may choose to ask the ancestors' advice, rather than seeking their aid with skills. Instead of a skill bonus, he may choose to ask them questions, as per the *commune* spell cast by a cleric of his level. He may do this only once per day; any other uses of ancestral communion during that day must be requests for help with a skill.

Death Talker (Ex): Due to his long association with the spirits of the departed, the 4th-level ancestral speaker gains a +2 bonus to all Diplomacy, Bluff, Intimidate, and Sense Motive checks against undead. At 8th level and every 4 levels thereafter, this bonus increases by +2.

Holy Presence (Ex): The ancestral speaker is considered to be his own holy symbol, as he is descended from the beings on whom he calls. Thus, he need not carry any such symbol, and can cast spells with the Divine Focus component without one.

Improved Resurrection (Ex): The ancestors on whom the speaker calls well know the pathways between life and death, and they can smooth over the transition for anyone making the crossing at their speaker's behest. Anyone raised or resurrected by an ancestral speaker still loses a level, but only a portion of the normal XP. Under most conditions, level loss drops the victim to the halfway point of the old level; someone raised by an ancestral speaker drops to the three-quarter mark. For example, a 9th-level character who is raised would normally drop to 32,000 XP. (A character

The Ancestral Speaker

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+2	+2	+2	Ancestral communion (skills) 1/day, holy presence
2nd	+1	+3	+3	+3	
3rd	+2	+3	+3	+3	
4th	+3	+4	+4	+4	Death talker +2
5th	+3	+4	+4	+4	Ancestral communion 2/day
6th	+4	+5	+5	+5	
7th	+5	+5	+5	+5	
8th	+6/+1	+6	+6	+6	Death talker +4
9th	+6/+1	+6	+6	+6	Ancestral communion (questions), improved resurrection
10th	+7/+2	+7	+7	+7	Ancestral communion 3/day
11th	+8/+3	+7	+7	+7	
12th	+9/+4	+8	+8	+8	Death talker +6
13th	+9/+4	+8	+8	+8	
14th	+10/+5	+9	+9	+9	
15th	+11/+6/+1	+9	+9	+9	Ancestral communion 4/day
16th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+10	+10	Death talker +8
17th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+10	+10	
18th	+13/+8/+3	+11	+11	+11	
19th	+14/+9/+4	+11	+11	+11	
20th	+15/+10/+5	+12	+12	+12	Ancestral communion 5/day, death talker +10

needs 28,000 for 8th level and 36,000 for 9th, so half the difference is 4,000.) If that character was raised by a speaker, however, he would drop only to 34,000 XP.

Arcane Disciple

Many worlds have gods of magic and clerics who worship them. Some clerics, however, give their devotion not to any deity of magic but to the concept and forces of magic itself. They believe that magic represents the fundamental power underlying all reality and worship it as a force higher than any god. These arcane disciples believe that all magic is inherently linked, although they have only managed to cross the boundary between arcane and divine in minor fashion. Many arcane disciples multiclass as wizards and go on to obtain the mystic theurge prestige class (see Chapter 6: Characters in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

Hit Die: d6

Class Skills

The arcane disciple's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (history) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Knowledge (the planes) (Int), Profession (Wis), Spellcraft (Int), and Use Magic Device (Cha).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (4 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the arcane disciple.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The arcane disciple is proficient with all simple weapons, with light and medium armor, and with shields (except tower shields).

Bonus Feats: At 1st level, at 5th level, and every five levels thereafter, the arcane disciple gains a bonus feat. These feats must be either metamagic or item creation feats.

Arcane to Divine (Ex): At every level, the arcane disciple may choose one arcane spell from either the bard or sorcerer/wizard spell list. This spell must be at least one level lower than the highest-level divine spell the character may cast. The arcane disciple may then add this spell to her normal clerical spell list, and forever after may cast it as a divine spell like any other. Furthermore, while the arcane disciple does not technically possess the Magic Domain (as she has no domains to choose from), all the spells of the Magic Domain are considered divine spells for the arcane disciple, and are added to her cleric spell list in addition to any arcane spells she chooses as she advances in level.

Hit Die D6

The Arcane Disciple

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Bonus feat, arcane to divine
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	Arcane to divine
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+3	Arcane to divine
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Arcane to divine
5th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Bonus feat, arcane to divine
6th	+4	+5	+2	+5	Arcane to divine
7th	+5	+5	+2	+5	Arcane to divine
8th	+6/+1	+6	+2	+6	Arcane to divine
9th	+6/+1	+6	+3	+6	Arcane to divine
10th	+7/+2	+7	+3	+7	Bonus feat, arcane to divine
11th	+8/+3	+7	+3	+7	Arcane to divine
12th	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	Arcane to divine
13th	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	Arcane to divine
14th	+10/+5	+9	+4	+9	Arcane to divine
15th	+11/+6/+1	+9	+5	+9	Bonus feat, arcane to divine
16th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	Arcane to divine
17th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	Arcane to divine
18th	+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+11	Arcane to divine
19th	+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+11	Arcane to divine
20th	+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+12	Bonus feat, arcane to divine

Aspirant

Among some religious orders, the goal of the initiates is not to serve the gods but to become like them. Some cultures believe divine ascension is possible—that mortals can rise to take a seat beside the gods themselves. Others maintain that mortals cannot become divinities but that they might yet serve the gods on a higher plane as saints or proxies. Still others believe that even if they never achieve true ascension through their endeavors, their efforts to imitate the divine raise them above their fellow mortals.

Hit Die: d8

Class Skills

The aspirant's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (history) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Knowledge (the planes) (Int), Profession (Wis), and Spellcraft (Int).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (4 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the aspirant.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The aspirant is proficient with all simple weapons, with all types of armor, and with shields (except tower shields).

Spontaneous Casting: At 1st level, the aspirant gains the ability to lose any prepared clerical spell for any other clerical spell of equal or lower level, but only once per day. She may cast a spontaneous spell twice per day at 4th level, three times per day at 8th, four times per day at 12th, and five times per day at 16th level. This represents the aspirant's growing ability to manipulate divine energies directly.

Shield of the Divine (Ex): At 1st level, the aspirant gains a +1 bonus to AC. At 5th level and every five levels thereafter, the bonus increases by +1. This bonus applies even when the aspirant is flatfooted or helpless.

***Divine Counterspell* (Sp):** An aspirant of 3rd-level or higher may counter a divine spell cast by another spellcaster without expending a spell for the day. The aspirant must be high enough level

THE ASPIRANT

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Spontaneous casting 1/day, shield of the divine +1
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+3	Divine counterspell
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Spontaneous casting 2/day
5th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Shield of the divine +2
6th	+4	+5	+2	+5	
7th	+5	+5	+2	+5	
8th	+6/+1	+6	+2	+6	Spontaneous casting 3/day
9th	+6/+1	+6	+3	+6	
10th	+7/+2	+7	+3	+7	Shield of the divine +3
11th	+8/+3	+7	+3	+7	
12th	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	Spontaneous casting 4/day
13th	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	
14th	+10/+5	+9	+4	+9	
15th	+11/+6/+1	+9	+5	+9	Shield of the divine +4
16th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	Spontaneous casting 5/day
17th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	
18th	+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+11	
19th	+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+11	
20th	+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+12	Shield of the divine +5, perfect self

HIT DIE D8

to cast a spell of the same level as the spell she wishes to counter. To do so, an aspirant must ready an action to counterspell as normal, but the aspirant need not determine what the spell is. If the spell cast is not a divine spell, the aspirant cannot counter it, but she does not waste her use of this ability, only her action. The aspirant can use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + her Charisma modifier.

Perfect Self: At 20th level, the aspirant has become so fully connected with the power of the divine that she becomes a magical creature. This ability has the same effect as the monk ability of the same name.

BENEVOLENT†

In many cultures, the primary function of the cleric is to bless the undertakings of others, to grant the gods' favor on those who labor in their name. The benevolent exemplifies this role. A benevolent is devoted to aiding and abetting others in their times of need and to increasing the good fortune of his allies. The benevolent is as capable in combat as any cleric—otherwise he could not accompany soldiers on the battlefield—but his focus is on their needs, not his own. The vast majority of benevolents are good-aligned, although evil ones are not unheard of.

Hit Die: d8

Class Skills

The benevolent's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (history) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Knowledge (the planes) (Int), Profession (Wis), and Spellcraft (Int).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (4 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the benevolent.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The arcane disciple is proficient with all simple weapons, with all types of armor, and with shields (including tower shields).

Spontaneous Casting (Ex): The benevolent has a wider range of spontaneous spells than the standard cleric, although they are all geared toward aiding others. The benevolent may lose any prepared spell of equal or higher level in exchange for any of the following spells: 0—*cure minor wounds, guidance, resistance;* 1st—*bless, cure light wounds, sanctuary;* 2nd—*aid, cure moderate wounds, shield other;* 3rd—*cure serious wounds, prayer, remove curse;* 4th—*cure critical wounds, restoration, spell immunity;* 5th—*atonement, mass cure light wounds;* 6th—*mass cure moderate wounds, heal;* 7th—*greater restoration, mass cure serious wounds;* 8th—*mass cure critical wounds;* 9th—*mass heal.*

***Luck of the Gods* (Sp):** Starting at 4th level, the benevolent can, with a brief benediction, bestow good fortune upon others. The recipient of this prayer may, any time within the next 24 hours, reroll any single die roll, as per the granted power for the Luck Domain. If the blessing is not used within 24 hours, it is lost. Additionally, the recipient may add a luck bonus equal to the benevolent's Charisma bonus to any single roll during that 24-hour period. These two effects can be applied to the same roll. The benevolent may not use this power on himself, and he may use it only upon someone within one alignment step of his deity. Multiple applications of *luck of the gods* do not stack. This power may be used once per day at 4th level, twice per day at 8th level, three times per day at 12th level, four times per day at 16th level, and five times per day at 20th level.

CRUSADER

The crusader is a holy warrior, a martial priest dedicated to battling the enemies of his church and spreading the teachings of his deity throughout the

HIT DIE D8

THE BENEVOLENT

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Spontaneous casting
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+3	
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Luck of the gods 1/day
5th	+3	+4	+1	+4	
6th	+4	+5	+2	+5	
7th	+5	+5	+2	+5	
8th	+6/+1	+6	+2	+6	Luck of the gods 2/day
9th	+6/+1	+6	+3	+6	
10th	+7/+2	+7	+3	+7	
11th	+8/+3	+7	+3	+7	
12th	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	Luck of the gods 3/day
13th	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	
14th	+10/+5	+9	+4	+9	
15th	+11/+6/+1	+9	+5	+9	
16th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	Luck of the gods 4/day
17th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	
18th	+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+11	
19th	+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+11	
20th	+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+12	Luck of the gods 5/day

lands. The crusader is in many respects akin to the paladin, but is devoted solely to ridding the world of the followers of enemy gods, rather than the paladin's code. She wields weapon and spell with equal faculty, and is willing either to lead others into battle or to stand against the enemy alone.

Hit Die: d8.

Class Skills

The crusader's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (history) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Profession (Wis), Ride, (Dex), and Spellcraft (Int).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (2 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the crusader.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The crusader is proficient with all simple weapons, with all types of armor, and with shields (including tower shields). In addition, the crusader may choose a single martial weapon with which she is proficient, as though she had the Martial Weapon Proficiency feat.

Deific Foe (Ex): At 1st level and every 5 levels thereafter, a crusader must choose a deity opposed to her own god. The crusader gains a +4 morale bonus to attack and damage rolls against worshipers of the chosen deific foe.

Turn Foe's Followers (Su): Starting at 1st level, the crusader may turn or destroy worshipers of her deific foe. This is resolved just like a normal cleric's turn undead ability, except that the ability only affects worshipers of the deific foe. A crusader can use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + her Charisma modifier. A crusader with 5 or more ranks of Knowledge (religion) gains a +2 bonus on turning checks against worshipers of her deific foe.

Bonus Feats: The crusader gains a bonus feat at 3rd level and every five levels thereafter. These feats must come from the fighter's bonus feat list, with the following alteration: Remove Weapon Specialization and Greater Weapon Specialization from the list (as *clerics cannot take those feats*), and replace it with Combat Casting.

Smite (Su): Once per day, beginning at 5th level, a crusader may make a smite attack against any foe, so long as the foe does not worship the crusader's deity and does not share either the deity's or the crusader's alignment. She adds her Charisma bonus to her attack roll and deals 1 extra point of damage per crusader level. If the crusader accidentally smites a creature that does not qualify by the above conditions, the smite has no effect, but the ability is still used up for the day. At 10th, 15th, and 20th level the crusader gains an additional smite attempt per day.

THE CRUSADER

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Deific foe, turn foe's followers
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+3	Bonus feat
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4	
5th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Smite
6th	+4	+5	+2	+5	Deific foe
7th	+5	+5	+2	+5	
8th	+6/+1	+6	+2	+6	Bonus feat
9th	+6/+1	+6	+3	+6	
10th	+7/+2	+7	+3	+7	Smite 2/day
11th	+8/+3	+7	+3	+7	Deific foe
12th	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	
13th	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	Bonus feat
14th	+10/+5	+9	+4	+9	
15th	+11/+6/+1	+9	+5	+9	Smite 3/day
16th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	Deific foe
17th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	
18th	+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+11	Bonus feat
19th	+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+11	
20th	+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+12	Smite 4/day

HIT DIE D8

evangelist†

Variably respected, scorned, or feared by other clerics, the evangelist has an intensely personal relationship with his deity. He has little if any formal training, and did not necessarily set out to serve a god; instead, his link with his deity developed naturally, not unlike a sorcerer's spellcasting ability. Evangelists have a narrower range of spells than a cleric, but they are capable of casting their spells spontaneously, with no need for advance preparation.

Hit Die: d8.

class skills

The evangelist's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (local) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Profession (Wis), and Spellcraft (Int).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (2 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 2 + Int modifier.

class features

All of the following are class features of the evangelist.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The evangelist is proficient with all simple weapons, with light and medium armor, and with shields (except tower shields).

Evangelist Spellcasting: The evangelist casts divine spells from the cleric spell list. His spellcasting ability is based on his Wisdom score. The evangelist casts these divine spells and gains spells known from the cleric list as a sorcerer casts arcane spells and gains spells from the sorcerer/wizard list. See the "Spells" ability of the sorcerer class for details. Note that the evangelist cannot learn a new divine spell in place of domain spells known.

Domains: At 1st level, the evangelist chooses two domains. He gains the granted ability of both domains, and he adds all the spells listed on the domain spell list to his spells known list at the appropriate levels (although he still can't cast these spells unless he is of appropriate level). The evangelist does not gain the cleric's ability to cast extra spells chosen from the domain lists.

the evangelist†

HIT DIE D8

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Domains
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+3	
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4	
5th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Additional domain
6th	+4	+5	+2	+5	
7th	+5	+5	+2	+5	
8th	+6/+1	+6	+2	+6	
9th	+6/+1	+6	+3	+6	
10th	+7/+2	+7	+3	+7	Additional domain
11th	+8/+3	+7	+3	+7	
12th	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	
13th	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	
14th	+10/+5	+9	+4	+9	
15th	+11/+6/+1	+9	+5	+9	Additional domain
16th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	
17th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	
18th	+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+11	
19th	+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+11	
20th	+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+12	Additional domain

evangelist† spells per day

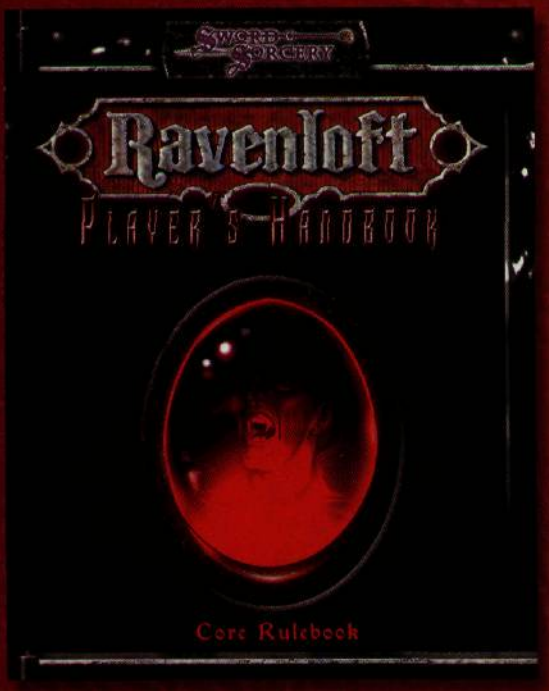
Level	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1st	5	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
2nd	6	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
3rd	6	5	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
4th	6	6	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
5th	6	6	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
6th	6	6	5	3	–	–	–	–	–	–
7th	6	6	6	4	–	–	–	–	–	–
8th	6	6	6	5	3	–	–	–	–	–
9th	6	6	6	6	4	–	–	–	–	–
10th	6	6	6	6	5	3	–	–	–	–
11th	6	6	6	6	6	4	–	–	–	–
12th	6	6	6	6	6	5	3	–	–	–
13th	6	6	6	6	6	6	4	–	–	–
14th	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	3	–	–
15th	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	4	–	–
16th	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	3	–
17th	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	4	–
18th	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	3
19th	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	4
20th	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	

evangelist spells known

Numbers after the "+" symbol refer to the domain spells added to the evangelist's spells known list.

Level	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1st	4	2+2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
2rd	5	2+2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
3rd	5	3+2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
4th	6	3+2	1+2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
5th	6	4+3	2+3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
6th	7	4+3	2+3	1+3	–	–	–	–	–	–
7th	7	5+3	3+3	2+3	–	–	–	–	–	–
8th	8	5+3	3+3	2+3	1+3	–	–	–	–	–
9th	8	5+3	4+3	3+3	2+3	–	–	–	–	–
10th	9	5+4	4+4	3+4	2+4	1+4	–	–	–	–
11th	9	5+4	5+4	4+4	3+4	2+4	–	–	–	–
12th	9	5+4	5+4	4+4	3+4	2+4	1+4	–	–	–
13th	9	5+4	5+4	4+4	4+4	3+4	2+4	–	–	–
14th	9	5+4	5+4	4+4	4+4	3+4	2+4	1+4	–	–
15th	9	5+5	5+5	4+5	4+5	4+5	3+5	2+5	–	–
16th	9	5+5	5+5	4+5	4+5	4+5	3+5	2+5	1+5	–
17th	9	5+5	5+5	4+5	4+5	4+5	3+5	3+5	2+5	–
18th	9	5+5	5+5	4+5	4+5	4+5	3+5	3+5	2+5	1+5
19th	9	5+5	5+5	4+5	4+5	4+5	3+5	3+5	3+5	2+5
20th	9	5+6	5+6	4+6	4+6	4+6	3+6	3+6	3+6	2+6

Only the bravest of heroes dare risk eternal night...



Ravenloft Player's Handbook
ISBN: 1-58846-091-6 Stock #: 15005
Retail Price: $34.95 U.S.

Available October 2003

This hardcover core rulebook completely updates the popular Ravenloft setting, making it fully compatible with the new 3.5 Edition of Dungeons and Dragons. It has a wealth of vital information on everything from basic character classes, skills, feats and spells to the many lands, people and monsters hidden within the Mists.

Ravenloft books are published under license with Wizards of the Coast and are 100% compatible with the new 3.5 Edition rules and the d20 System.

CHANGING NATURE'S Design

VARIANT DRUIDS

by Matthew Sernett · illustrated by Dan Scott

Master of the elements and warden of the wild, the druid occupies a crucial niche among the spellcasting classes. Yet with such broad powers over plants, animals, elements, and the natural world, the druid class presents its own niches for specialization and more focused powers. A variant druid could specialize in plants, an element, a particular class of animal, or like the four variant druids presented in this article, dedicate herself to more esoteric ideas.

SHARED RULES

All the classes presented here are derivates of the druid. They share the same alignment restrictions and spell progression as the druid class, but they differ in many other ways. If the level advancement table and class features descriptions of a class presented below lack a class feature of the druid class, such as wild shape, that class does not gain that class feature. Levels of these classes count as levels of a standard druid in terms of spellcasting ability, qualification for feats and prestige classes, and the like. A character must choose upon first becoming a druid whether to be a core druid or one of these variants. Once the choice is made, it cannot be changed or unmade, and the character may not later multiclass into the core druid class or one of these variants.

WILD REAPER

Autumn is a time for harvest. The fruits of summer fall from the vine and collect to rot, bearing the seeds and becoming the food for the next generation. This is where death interjects in the cycle of life, making killing a means of rebirth. Wild reapers acknowledge this aspect of nature and love it for the vital force it is. With a dispassionate eye, the wild reaper sees the autumn of all creatures, and when a creature's harvest time comes, a wild reaper is ready with scythe and spell.

Wild reapers walk beside death. To them, dying is a healthy and necessary part of life. Yet wild reapers know death has its time and place in the natural cycle, like autumn has its place in the order of the seasons. Harvesting life too early prevents the birth of the next generation and diminishes the strength and wisdom the elderly pass on.

Wild reapers often unnerve people due to their preoccupation with death. They always seem to be looking for signs of illness or weakness in others, watching with predatory glee for evidence that a creature's harvest time has come. They keep company with beasts of a similar bent: carnivores and scavengers, nature's murderers and undertakers. Evil wild reapers earn a bad reputation for their fellows as even the smallest handicap or

The Wild Reaper

HIT DIE: D8

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Animal companion, nature sense
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	Woodland stride
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+3	Spontaneous casting
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Resist nature's lure
5th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Wild shape (1/day)
6th	+4	+5	+2	+5	Wild shape (2/day)
7th	+5	+5	+2	+5	Wild shape (3/day)
8th	+6/+1	+6	+2	+6	Wild shape (Large)
9th	+6/+1	+6	+3	+6	Disease immunity
10th	+7/+2	+7	+3	+7	Wild shape (4/day)
11th	+8/+3	+7	+3	+7	Wild shape (Tiny)
12th	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	Turn undead
13th	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	Resist death's lure
14th	+10/+5	+9	+4	+9	Wild shape (5/day)
15th	+11/+6/+1	+9	+5	+9	Wild shape (Huge)
16th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	Fast healing 1
17th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	Ability damage healing 1
18th	+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+11	Wild shape (6/day)
19th	+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+11	Timeless body
20th	+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+12	Fast healing 3, ability damage healing 2

injury is an excuse to "purify" a species. Neutral and lawful wild reapers take the long view, waiting for time to decide what lives must ebb so that new life can flow into the world. Good wild reapers judge for themselves what will make the world a better place and help the weak become strong and the foolish wise. Chaotic wild reapers encompass all these views, acting as whim takes them.

Wild reapers tend to stay in places where the evidence of death and the changes of the seasons are obvious. They favor temperate forests, but individuals can be found anywhere from marshes to mountains, wherever life and death flourish.

Hit Die: d8.

Class Skills

The wild reaper's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Spellcraft (Int), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), and Swim (Str).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (2 + Int modifier) x 2.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the wild reaper.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Wild reapers are proficient with the following weapons: club, battleaxe, dagger, dart, kama, nunchaku, quarterstaff, scythe, sickle, sling, and throwing axe. They are also proficient with all natural attacks (unarmed strike, claw, bite, and so forth), regardless of the forms they assume (see Wild Shape, below). Wild reapers are proficient with light and medium armor but are prohibited from wearing metal armor; thus, they may wear only padded, leather, or hide armor. (A wild reaper may also wear wooden armor that has been altered by the *ironwood* spell so that it functions as though it were steel. See the *ironwood* spell description.) Wild reapers are proficient with shields (except tower shields) but must use only wooden ones.

A wild reaper who wears metal armor or carries a metal shield is unable to cast druid spells or use any of her supernatural or spell-like class abilities while doing so and for 24 hours thereafter.

Spells: This class feature is the same as the druid class feature of the same name described in the *Player's Handbook*. A wild reaper follows the same spell progression as the druid.

Chaotic, Evil, Good, and Lawful Spells: This class feature is the same as the druid class feature of the same name described in the *Player's Handbook*.

Bonus Languages: This class feature is the same as the druid class feature of the same name described in the *Player's Handbook*.

Animal Companion (Ex): This class feature is the same as the druid class feature of the same name described in the *Player's Handbook* except that the wild reaper's animal companion must be a carnivorous or omnivorous animal that feeds on carrion.

Nature Sense (Ex): This class feature is the same as the druid class feature of the same name described in the *Player's Handbook*.

Woodland Stride (Ex): This class feature is the same as the druid class feature of the same name described in the *Player's Handbook*.

Spontaneous Casting: Starting at 3rd level, a wild reaper can channel stored spell energy into summoning spells that she hasn't prepared ahead of time. She can "lose" a prepared spell in order to cast any *summon nature's ally* spell of the same level or lower. In addition, the wild reaper can substitute a prepared spell with *soften earth and stone, warp wood, diminish plants, poison, blight,*

rusting grasp, transmute rock to mud, antilife shell, or *finger of death* so long as the spell chosen from this list is of equal or lower level than the spell being substituted.

Resist Nature's Lure (Ex): This class feature is the same as the druid class feature of the same name described in the *Player's Handbook.*

Wild Shape (Su): At 5th level, a wild reaper gains the ability to turn herself into any Small or Medium animal and back again once per day. Her options for new forms include all carnivorous or omnivorous animals that feed on carrion. This ability functions like the *polymorph* spell, except as noted here. The effect lasts for 1 hour per wild reaper level, or until she changes back. Changing form (to animal or back) is a standard action and doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity. The form chosen must be that of an animal the wild reaper is familiar with.

A wild reaper loses her ability to speak while in animal form because she is limited to the sounds that a normal, untrained animal can make, but she can communicate normally with other animals of the same general grouping as her new form.

A wild reaper can use this ability more times per day at 6th, 7th, 10th, 14th, and 18th level, as noted on the wild reaper advancement table. In addition, she gains the ability to take the shape of a Large animal at 8th level, a Tiny animal at 11th level, and a Huge animal at 15th level. The new form's Hit Dice can't exceed the character's wild reaper level.

Disease Immunity (Ex): At 9th level, a wild reaper gains immunity to all diseases, including supernatural infections like mummy rot and lycanthropy.

Turn Undead (Su): Wild reapers despise undead as abominations outside the natural order. When a wild reaper reaches 12th level, she gains the supernatural ability to turn undead. She may use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + her Charisma modifier. She turns undead as a cleric of two levels lower would. The wild reaper does not need a holy symbol to turn undead.

Resist Death's Lure (Ex): Starting at 13th level, a wild reaper gains a +4 bonus on saving throws against level drain and death effects.

Fast Healing (Su): Starting at 16th level, a wild reaper resists the call of death before age should take her. She heals 1 hit point of damage per round. At 20th level this ability improves to fast healing 3.

Ability Damage Healing (Su): After attaining 17th level, a wild reaper resists weaknesses not caused by age. She heals 1 point of ability damage to all damaged ability scores each round so long as the wild reaper has at least 1 point of Constitution. At 20th level this ability heals 2 points to all ability scores each round.

Timeless Body (Ex): After attaining 19th level, a wild reaper no longer takes ability score penalties for aging and cannot be magically aged. Any penalties she may have already incurred, however, remain in place. Bonuses still accrue, and the wild reaper still dies of old age when her time is up.

WIND WALKER

Air fills voids, flowing into hungry lungs to give life to the newly born. Air passes soft lips to breathe words, granting creatures the ability to comprehend one another. The wind walker knows he cannot hope to master these, the air's most subtle and powerful abilities, but he can gain power over its more brutal movements.

Wind walkers favor the element of air, and they relish the tornado as much as the breeze that tousles hair. Their love and devotion to the elemental force grants them control of gales and zephyrs. With a word and a gesture, the wind walker can call upon the air to slow his fall or bowl over a giant. Wind walkers long for the freedom of the open skies. They view all flying creatures as kindred spirits and call upon such creatures to accompany them as they follow the wind wherever it leads.

Wind walkers find it hard to abide stillness, both their own and that of the air. They are uncomfortable in enclosed spaces, and many are phobic of being underwater or buried alive. Evil and chaotic wind walkers take it upon themselves to show others the power of the least recognized element. Neutral and lawful wind walkers can often be found working with a group of flying creatures to protect them and serve their needs. Good wind walkers recognize that the air is an enigmatic and unpredictable force in the natural world, and they seek to ensure more good comes of it than ill.

Wind walkers are free spirits that tend to roam, allowing the concerns of more sedentary creatures to blow over them. They only become anchored to a place where they can experience many kinds of winds or when they see a threat to a community of flying creatures. For this reason, most wind walkers can be found in mountain ranges of all climes, but adventurous wind walkers can be found anywhere the wind blows and many places it does not.

Hit Die: d8.

Class Skills

The wind walker's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Spellcraft (Int), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), and Swim (Str).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (2 + Int modifier) x 2.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the wind walker.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Wind walkers are proficient with the following weapons: club, dagger, dart, javelin, quarterstaff, scimitar, shortbow, composite shortbow, sling, and spear. They are also proficient with all natural attacks (unarmed strike, slam, and so forth), regardless of the forms they assume (see Elemental Shape, below). Wind walkers are proficient with light armor but are prohibited from wearing metal armor; thus, they may wear only padded, leather, or hide armor. (A wind walker may also wear wooden armor that has been altered by the *ironwood* spell so that it functions as though it were steel.) Wind walkers are proficient with shields (except tower shields) but must use only wooden ones.

A wind walker who wears metal armor or carries a metal shield is unable to cast druid spells or use any of his supernatural or spell-like class abilities while doing so and for 24 hours thereafter.

Spells: This class feature is the same as the druid class feature of the same

THE WIND WALKER

HIT DIE: D8

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+0	+2	+2	Aerial companion, aerial empathy, zephyr spellcasting
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+3	*Feather fall* (1/day)
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+3	*Whispering wind* (1/day)
4th	+3	+1	+4	+4	Air mastery
5th	+3	+1	+4	+4	*Feather fall* (2/day)
6th	+4	+2	+5	+5	Friend of the air
7th	+5	+2	+5	+5	*Fly* (1/day), *whispering wind* (2/day)
8th	+6/+1	+2	+6	+6	*Feather fall* (3/day)
9th	+6/+1	+3	+6	+6	Air spell immunity
10th	+7/+2	+3	+7	+7	*Fly* (2/day),
11th	+8/+3	+3	+7	+7	*Whispering wind* (3/day)
12th	+9/+4	+4	+8	+8	Air domain (granted powers)
13th	+9/+4	+4	+8	+8	*Fly* (3/day)
14th	+10/+5	+4	+9	+9	Air domain (domain spells)
15th	+11/+6/+1	+5	+9	+9	Timeless body
16th	+12/+7/+2	+5	+10	+10	Elemental shape (air elemental 1/day)
17th	+12/+7/+2	+5	+10	+10	
18th	+13/+8/+3	+6	+11	+11	Elemental shape (air elemental 2/day)
19th	+14/+9/+4	+6	+11	+11	
20th	+15/+10/+5	+6	+12	+12	Elemental shape (air elemental 3/day, Huge elemental)

name described in the *Player's Handbook*. A wind walker follows the same spell progression as the druid.

Spontaneous Casting: A wind walker can channel stored spell energy into summoning or air spells that he hasn't prepared ahead of time. He can "lose" a prepared spell in order to cast any *summon nature's ally* spell or druid spell with the air descriptor, but the spell must be of the same level or lower. If used to cast a *summon nature's ally* spell, the summoned ally must have the ability to fly.

Chaotic, Evil, Good, and Lawful Spells: This class feature is the same as the druid class feature of the same name described in the *Player's Handbook*.

Bonus Languages: A wind walker's bonus language options include Druidic, the secret language of druids. Wind walkers are forbidden to teach this language to nondruids. Druidic has its own alphabet. This option is in addition to the bonus languages available to the character because of his race.

A wind walker also knows Auran, the language of air creatures, which he learns upon becoming a 1st-level wind walker. Auran is a free language for a wind walker; that is, he knows it in addition to his regular allotment of languages, and it doesn't take up a language slot.

Aerial Companion (Ex): A wind walker may begin play with a flying animal companion selected from the following list: eagle, hawk, or owl. This animal is a loyal companion that accompanies the wind walker on his adventures as appropriate for its species.

A 1st-level wind walker's aerial companion is completely typical for its kind except as noted in the sidebar on page 36 of the *Player's Handbook*. As a wind walker advances in level, the animal's power increases as shown on the table in the sidebar.

If a wind walker releases his companion from service, he may gain a new one by performing a ceremony requiring 24 uninterrupted hours of prayer. This ceremony can also replace an aerial companion that has perished.

Like a druid's ability to select an alternative animal companion, a wind walker may instead select an alternative aerial companion at higher levels. The wind walker applies the indicated adjustment to his wind walker level (in parentheses) for purposes of determining the companion's characteristics and special abilities. A wind walker of 4th level or higher may instead select a dire bat or hippogriff (level -3). A 7th-level wind walker may choose a giant eagle, giant owl, or juvenile arrowhawk (level -6). A 10th-level wind walker may choose a griffon or adult arrowhawk (level -9). At 13th level, the wind walker may choose a dragonne (level -12). A 16th-level wind walker may choose an elder arrowhawk (level -15).

Aerial Empathy (Ex): A wind walker can use body language, vocalizations, and demeanor to improve the attitude of a magical beast or animal with the air subtype or ability to fly. This ability functions just like a Diplomacy check made to improve the attitude of a person (see Chapter 4: Skills in the *Player's Handbook*). The wind walker rolls 1d20 and adds his wind walker level and Charisma modifier to the roll to determine the aerial empathy check result. The typical domestic animal has a starting attitude of indifferent, while wild animals and magical beasts are usually unfriendly.

To use aerial empathy, the wind walker and target creature must be able to study each other, which means that they must be within 30 feet of one another under normal conditions.

Generally, influencing a creature in this way takes 1 minute but, as with influencing people, it might take more or less time.

Zephyr Spellcasting (Ex): A wind walker casts druid spells with the air descriptor as though his caster level were 1 level higher. In addition, a wind walker adds +1 to the DCs of all such spells he casts.

Air Mastery (Ex): Airborne creatures take a -1 penalty to attack and damage rolls against a wind walker of 4th level or higher.

***Feather Fall* (Sp):** After attaining 2nd level, the wind walker can cast *feather fall* as a caster of a level equal to his wind walker level. The wind walker gains additional uses of this ability as shown in the wind walker level advancement table.

***Whispering Wind* (Sp):** After attaining 3rd level, the wind walker can cast *whispering wind* as a caster of a level equal to his wind walker level. The wind walker gains additional uses of this ability as shown in the wind walker level advancement table.

Friend of the Winds (Su): At 6th-level, a wind walker counts as two size categories larger when determining the effects severe wind have on him. See Table 3-24: Wind Effects in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

***Fly* (Sp):** After attaining 7th level, the wind walker can cast *fly* as a caster of a level equal to his wind walker level. The wind walker gains additional uses of this ability as shown in the wind walker level advancement table.

Air Spell Immunity (Su): At 9th level, a wind walker is immune to spells with the air descriptor, as though the spell failed to penetrate spell resistance. The wind walker may suppress this immunity for a specific effect he wishes to benefit from, such as the *wind walk* spell, using a standard action. Reactivating the ability is also a standard action.

Air Domain: A 12th-level wind walker receives the granted powers of the Air domain described on page 185 of the *Player's Handbook*. At 14th-level, the wind walker gains access to the domain spells of the Air domain just like a cleric; he may prepare and cast the domain spell listed for each level once a day so long as he is of a level high enough to cast spells of that level. A wind walker cannot use the spontaneous spellcasting ability with these spells.

Timeless Body (Ex): After attaining 15th level, a wind walker no longer takes ability score penalties for aging (see Table 6-5: Aging Effects in the *Player's Handbook*) and cannot be magically aged. Any penalties he may have already incurred, however, remain in place. Bonuses still accrue, and the wind walker still dies of old age when his time is up.

Elemental Shape (Su): At 16th level, a wind walker can take the form of a Small, Medium, or Large air elemental once per day. This ability functions like the *polymorph* spell, except as noted here. The effect lasts for 1 hour per wind walker level, or until he changes back. Changing form (to elemental or back) is a standard action and doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity. The new form's Hit Dice can't exceed the character's wind walker level. The wind walker gains all the elemental's extraordinary, supernatural, and spell-like abilities. He also gains the elemental's feats for as long as he maintains the elemental shape, but he retains his own creature type (humanoid, in most cases).

At 18th level, a wind walker becomes able to assume elemental form twice per day, and at 20th level he can do so three times per day. At 20th level, a druid may use this elemental shape ability to change into a Huge elemental.

METAL MASTER

If stone forms the bones of the world, then assuredly metal makes for the land's marrow. It colors cave walls and forms ingots in shallow streams, but it otherwise lacks the presence and power of the more obvious elements of nature. Yet when harvested and shaped for a purpose, few materials have strength enough to resist it. This quality of metal forms the core of the metal master's philosophy.

Metal masters are anomalous among druids. They forsake their connection to animals and the elements to focus on an aspect of the natural world that druids must deny themselves. They respect the potential of raw ore to become something greater, and devote themselves to mastering that process in themselves. Metal masters believe all creatures of the world have a like ability, both to be formed and form themselves, and in a world filled with so many potential tools and weapons, metal masters would be the forgers.

Metal masters see the world as a great foundry. Creatures are either smiths themselves or pig iron to be formed and used by others. This outlook causes many metal masters to be manipulative and dismissive with those who do not shown drive or impress with their actions. Evil metal masters exemplify this outlook, while lawful metal masters tend to be less dismissive but more controlling. Neutral metal masters care little for how other creatures forge their destinies and focus wholly on their own. Chaotic metal masters gleefully shape those around them without thought to the consequences; good metal masters try to teach others about their own potential to change themselves into a force for good in the world.

Metal masters stay close to sources of metal, and many can be found wandering caves or living on the banks of gold-filled streams. Metal masters love mines, so long as the detritus of such operations are cared for properly. Metal masters also journey into civilized areas more often than any other kind of druid. They prefer to use urban smithies, saving the natural world from the smoke and wastes of the process, and they also use these visits to mold others in their vision or preach their philosophy of self-actualization.

Hit Die: d10.

Class Skills

The metal master's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (architecture and engineering) (Int), Knowledge (dungeoneering) (Int), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Spellcraft (Int), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), and Swim (Str).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (2 + Int modifier) x 2.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the metal master.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Metal masters are proficient with all simple and martial melee weapons made primarily of metal. Metal masters

are proficient with all armors and with shields (including tower shields).

Spells: This class feature is the same as the druid class feature of the same name described in the *Player's Handbook*. A metal master follows the same spell progression as the druid.

Spontaneous Casting: A metal master can channel stored spell energy into druid spells that she hasn't prepared ahead of time. She can "lose" a prepared spell in order to cast one of these spells so long as it is of the same level or lower: *chill metal, heat metal, rusting grasp, ironwood, transmute metal to wood, repel metal or stone.*

Chaotic, Evil, Good, and Lawful Spells: This class feature is the same as the druid class feature of the same name described in the *Player's Handbook*.

Bonus Languages: A metal master's bonus language options include Druidic, the secret language of druids. Metal masters are forbidden to teach this language to nondruids. Druidic has its own alphabet. This option is in addition to the bonus languages available to the character because of her race.

A metal master also knows Terran, the language of earth creatures, which she learns upon becoming a 1st-level metal master. Terran is a free language for a metal master; that is, she knows it in addition to her regular allotment of languages, and it doesn't take up a language slot.

Mine Sense (Ex): At 1st level, the metal master gains a +2 bonus on Knowledge (dungeoneering) and Knowledge (architecture and engineering) checks.

Metal Sense (Ex): At 3rd level, the metal master gains a +2 bonus on Craft (armorsmithing), Craft (blacksmithing), and Craft (weaponsmithing) checks.

Damage Reduction (Su): As a metal master forges a destiny and grows in power, her body makes a supernatural connection to the qualities of the metals in the earth. At 6th level, the metal master gains damage reduction 1/bludgeoning, her body becoming inured to all strikes but the blows that fall like hammers on anvils. This damage reduction improves as shown in the metal master advancement chart until at 16th level, the metal master loses her bludgeoning damage reduction and gains damage reduction 5/cold iron, silver, or adamantine. At this point, the metal master suffers less damage from all blows except those made from the metals that are the true blood and bones of the earth. At 18th level, this damage reduction improves as shown in the metal master advancement chart, until at 20th level, the metal master has damage reduction 5/adamantine, reducing the damage of attacks from all but the hardest metal.

***Major Creation* (Sp):** Once per day, the metal master can cast *major creation* as a caster of a level equal to her metal master level. The metal master can only create objects made of metal with this spell.

Timeless Body (Ex): After attaining 15th level, a metal master no longer takes ability score penalties for aging (see Table 6-5: Aging Effects in the *Player's Handbook*) and cannot be magically aged. Any penalties she may have already incurred, however, remain in place. Bonuses still accrue, and the metal master still dies of old age when her time is up.

***Iron Body* (Sp):** The metal master can cast *iron body* as a caster of a level equal to her metal master level.

WINTER WARDEN

In winter, the world sleeps. Blanketed with white and rimed to glistening, the land knows a peace like a kind and quiet death. Nature holds its breath through the season, anticipating the riotous and messy birth of spring with

THE METAL MASTER

HIT DIE: D10

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+2	+0	+0	Mine sense
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+0	
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+1	Metal sense
4th	+3	+4	+1	+1	
5th	+3	+4	+1	+1	
6th	+4	+5	+2	+2	Damage reduction 1/bludgeoning
7th	+5	+5	+2	+2	
8th	+6/+1	+6	+2	+2	Damage reduction 2/bludgeoning
9th	+6/+1	+6	+3	+3	
10th	+7/+2	+7	+3	+3	Damage reduction 3/bludgeoning
11th	+8/+3	+7	+3	+3	*Major creation* 1/day
12th	+9/+4	+8	+4	+4	Damage reduction 4/bludgeoning
13th	+9/+4	+8	+4	+4	
14th	+10/+5	+9	+4	+4	Damage reduction 5/bludgeoning
15th	+11/+6/+1	+9	+5	+5	Timeless body
16th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+5	Damage reduction 5/cold iron, silver, or adamantine
17th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+5	
18th	+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+6	Damage reduction 5/silver or adamantine
19th	+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+6	*Iron body* 1/day
20th	+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+6	Damage reduction 5/adamantine

glacial patience. This is the winter warden's time.

Like druids, winter wardens devote themselves to nurturing nature, but their affinity for the natural world takes peculiar form. Winter wardens champion frost, ice, and snow. They love the world most when cold winds float flurries through barren treetops, across dormant fields, and over white-capped waves. They view winter as a great testing time for every creature, a period of winnowing that culls the old, weak, ill, and foolish to make room for the young, strong, and wise. Winter makes the world a better place in this way, and winter wardens follow the season's example.

Winter wardens tend to be quiet and watchful. They remain distant and aloof, even with long-time acquaintances. Neutral and lawful winter wardens can take this outlook to extremes, becoming inured to the suffering of others and uncaring about their plights. Chaotic or evil winter wardens often view themselves as blizzards, great tests that winter sends to ensure only the most hale or well prepared survive. Good winter wardens often seek to help other creatures ready themselves for hardships ahead, ensuring that the good as well as the healthy and the wise survive troubled times.

Winter wardens can be found in any cold locale, and many follow the winter season in its dance north and south of the equator. Particularly sedentary winter wardens live like many members of the standard druid class, choosing a particular natural area to call home and living there year round. Adventuresome winter wardens can be found anywhere, even places that never feel the delicious chill of their favorite season.

Hit Die: d8.

Class Skills

The winter warden's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (geography) (Int), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Spellcraft (Int), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), and Swim (Str).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (4 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the winter warden.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The winter warden has the same proficiencies and restrictions as the druid as described in the *Player's Handbook*.

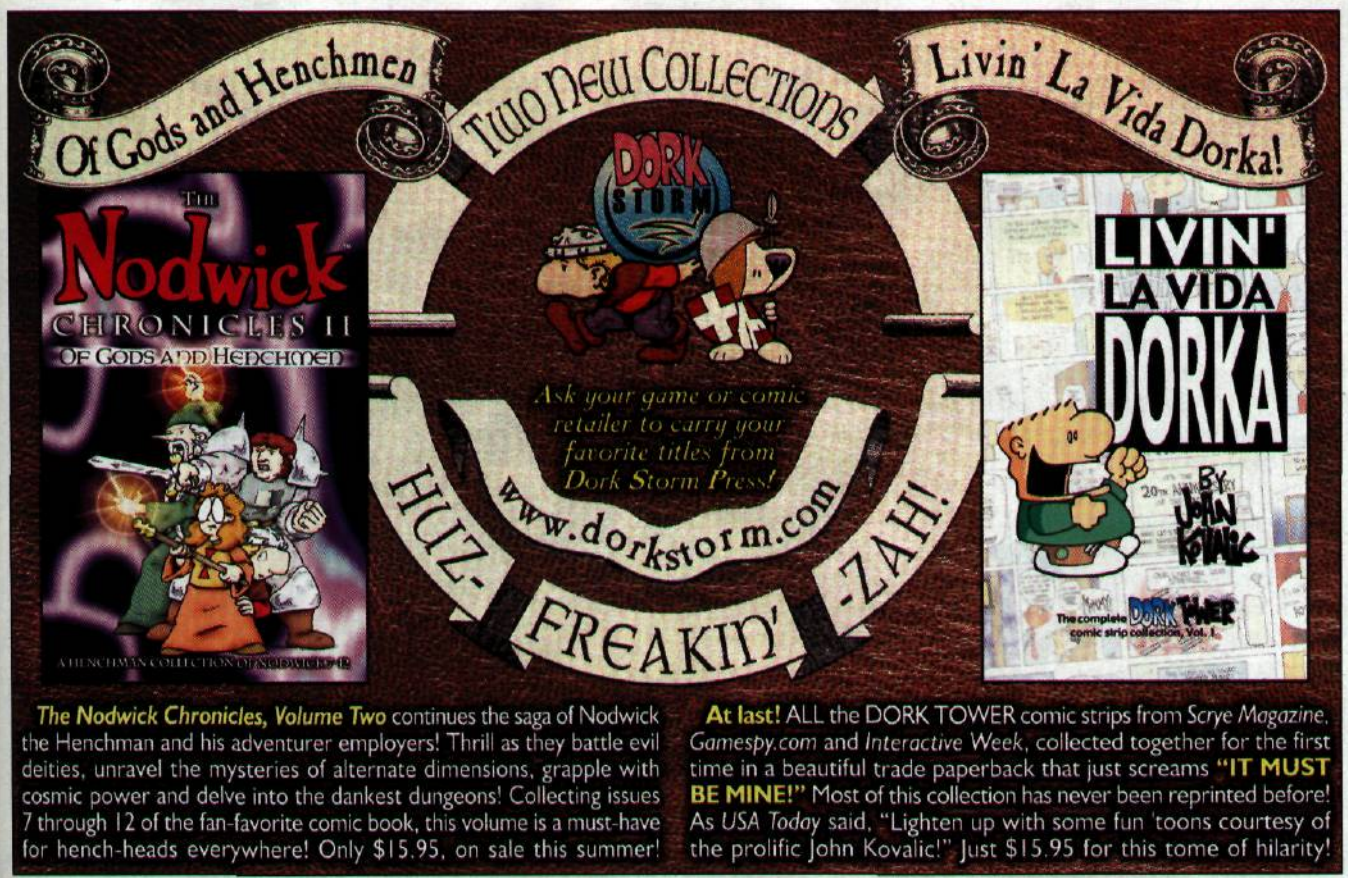
Spells: This class feature is the same as the druid class feature of the same name described in the *Player's Handbook*. A winter warden follows the same spell progression as the druid.

Chaotic, Evil, Good, and Lawful Spells: This class feature is the same as the druid class feature of the same name described in the *Player's Handbook*.

Bonus Languages: This class feature is the same as the druid class feature of the same name described in the *Player's Handbook*.

Animal Companion (Ex): This class feature is the same as the druid class feature of the same name described in the *Player's Handbook*.

Cold Casting (Ex): A winter warden casts all spells (including spell-like abilities) with the cold descriptor as though his caster level were 1 level higher. In addition, a winter warden adds +1 to the DCs of all such spells he casts.


Of Gods and Henchmen
Two New Collections
Livin' La Vida Dorka!
The Nodwick Chronicles II
Of Gods and Henchmen
DORK STORM
Ask your game or comic retailer to carry your favorite titles from Dork Storm Press!
www.dorkstorm.com
HUZ-
FREAKIN'
-ZAH!
LIVIN' LA VIDA DORKA
By John Kovalic
The complete Dork Tower comic strip collection, Vol. 1

The Nodwick Chronicles, Volume Two continues the saga of Nodwick the Henchman and his adventurer employers! Thrill as they battle evil deities, unravel the mysteries of alternate dimensions, grapple with cosmic power and delve into the dankest dungeons! Collecting issues 7 through 12 of the fan-favorite comic book, this volume is a must-have for hench-heads everywhere! Only $15.95, on sale this summer!

At last! ALL the DORK TOWER comic strips from *Scrye Magazine*, *Gamespy.com* and *Interactive Week*, collected together for the first time in a beautiful trade paperback that just screams **"IT MUST BE MINE!"** Most of this collection has never been reprinted before! As *USA Today* said, "Lighten up with some fun 'toons courtesy of the prolific John Kovalic!" Just $15.95 for this tome of hilarity!

THE WINTER WARDEN

HIT DIE: D8

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Animal companion, cold casting, nature sense, wild empathy
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	*Ray of frost*
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+3	Drift stride
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Trackless step
5th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Ice stride
6th	+4	+5	+2	+5	Wild shape (1/day)
7th	+5	+5	+2	+5	Wild shape (2/day)
8th	+6/+1	+6	+2	+6	Wild shape (3/day)
9th	+6/+1	+6	+3	+6	Resistance to cold 5
10th	+7/+2	+7	+3	+7	Wild shape (Large)
11th	+8/+3	+7	+3	+7	Wild shape (4/day)
12th	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	Resistance to cold 10
13th	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	*Wall of ice* 1/day
14th	+10/+5	+9	+4	+9	Wild shape (5/day)
15th	+11/+6/+1	+9	+5	+9	Resistance to cold 20
16th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	Wild shape (Huge)
17th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	*Otiluke's freezing sphere* 1/day
18th	+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+11	Immunity to cold
19th	+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+11	Wild shape (6/day)
20th	+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+12	*Polar ray* 1/day

Nature Sense (Ex): This class feature is the same as the druid class feature of the same name described in the *Player's Handbook*.

Wild Empathy (Ex): This class feature is the same as the druid class feature of the same name described in the *Player's Handbook* except that the winter warden does not suffer the usual penalty when using this ability on a magical beast of the cold subtype.

***Ray of Frost* (Sp):** At 2nd level, *ray of frost* is added to the winter warden's spell list as a 0-level spell. He can prepare and cast the spell as part of his normal allotment of druid spells.

Drift Stride (Su): Starting at 3rd level, a winter warden can move across the top of snow and not step into it or be impeded in his progress over a snowy area, similar to the effects of a *water walk* spell. Snow enchanted or magically manipulated to impede movement still affects the winter warden.

Trackless Step (Ex): This class feature is the same as the druid class feature of the same name described in the *Player's Handbook*.

Ice Stride (Su): Starting at 5th level, a winter warden can move across ice and not step onto it or be impeded in his progress over an icy area, similar to the effects of a *water walk* spell. He does not take two squares of movement to enter an icy area, and Balance, Tumble, or Climb DCs in the area are not increased for him. This ability does not protect the winter warden from the cold of the ice or the negative effects due to long contact. Ice enchanted or magically manipulated to impede movement still affects the winter warden.

Wild Shape (Su): At 6th level, a winter warden gains the ability to turn himself into any Small or Medium animal and back again once per day. His options for new forms include any creature of the animal type. This ability functions like the *polymorph* spell, except as noted here. The effect lasts for 1 hour per winter warden level, or until he changes back. Changing form (to animal or back) is a standard action and doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity. The form chosen must be that of an animal the winter warden is familiar with, usually a creature that exists in arctic climes.

A winter warden loses his ability to speak while in animal form because he is limited to the sounds that an untrained animal can make, but he can communicate normally with other animals of the same general grouping as his new form.

A winter warden can use this ability more times per day as noted on the winter warden advancement table. In addition, he gains the ability to take the shape of a Large animal at 10th level and a Huge animal at 16th level. The new form's Hit Dice can't exceed the character's winter warden level.

Resistance to Cold (Ex): Starting at 9th level, a winter warden gains resistance to cold 5. This resistance increases as the winter warden gains levels, as shown on the winter warden advancement chart.

***Wall of Ice* (Sp):** After 13th level, the winter warden can cast *wall of ice* as a caster of a level equal to his winter warden level once per day.

***Otiluke's Freezing Sphere* (Sp):** After 17th level, the winter warden can cast *Otiluke's freezing sphere* as a caster of a level equal to his winter warden level once per day.

Immunity to Cold (Ex): Starting at 18th level, a winter warden is immune to cold damage.

***Polar Ray* (Sp):** At 20th level, the winter warden can cast *polar ray* as a caster of a level equal to his winter warden level once per day. D

d20stuff.com
Your #1 stop for open source content on the web!
Feats • Magic Items • Gods • Riddles
NPCs • Spells • Campaign Settings
Skills • Equipment • Prestige Classes
Domains • Classes • Phobias • Articles
Races • Fighting Styles • Adventures
Come get your d20 stuff!

"—in, anyone...

I'm heading up the south trench toward Garret Town. There's something coming in from the south. Mutants I think. They're armed.

Oh, God— Someone... help..."

Your ancestors built a paradise. Then, they destroyed it.
Those were the Final Wars. This is what comes after.

Are you ready to build something new?
Are you ready to tame a world run wild?

Are you ready for...

GAMMA WORLD

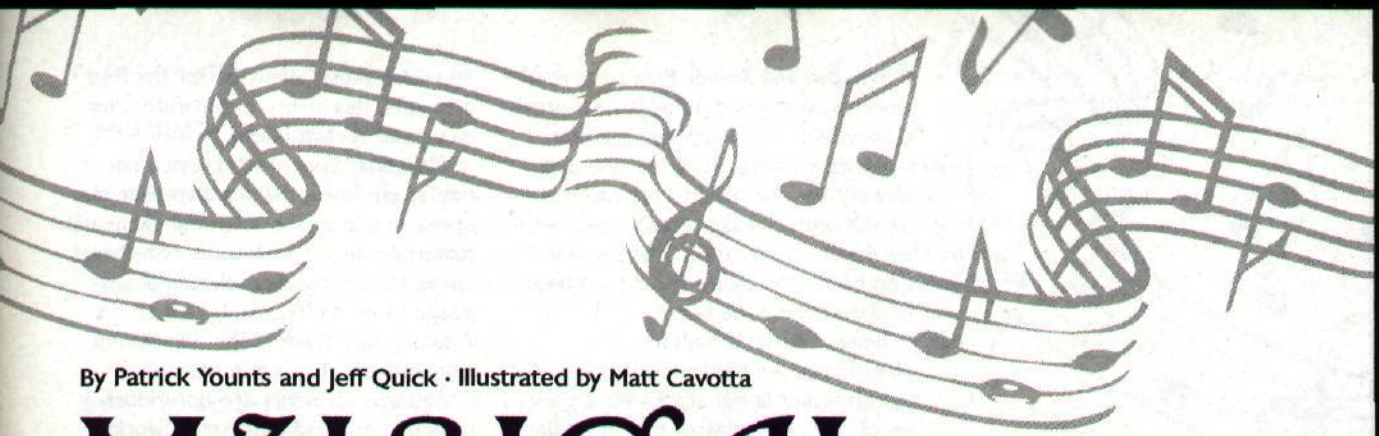
Sword & Sorcery Studios re-imagines the classic game of post-apocalyptic adventure.

Fully compatible with d20 Modern and 3.5 mechanics.
The Gamma World Player's Handbook™.

Available this October.

Are you ready?

White Wolf is a registered trademark of White Wolf Publishing, Inc. Arthaus and Sword & Sorcery are trademarks of White Wolf Publishing, Inc. Gamma World is a registered trademark of Wizards of the Coast, Inc, and is used by White Wolf under license. Gamma World Player's Handbook, d20 Modern Roleplaying Game, d20 Modern, the d20 logo, the Wizards of the Coast logo and "d20 System" are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast, Inc., a subsidiary of Hasbro, Inc., and are used with permission. The mention of or reference to any company or product is not a challenge to the trademark or copyright concerned.



By Patrick Younts and Jeff Quick · Illustrated by Matt Cavotta

MUSICAL MASTERS

prestige classes for bards

The truth about the average bard is that there's no such thing as the average bard. More than any other class, a bard's destiny is her own to choose. With a selection of diverse abilities, a bard can be a soldier, a sage, a diplomat, a spy, a performer, and the teller and subject of legends—a hero.

Here are five new prestige classes for the one class that always takes the road less traveled.

WORLDSPEAKER

In the mind of the worldspeaker, "the walls have ears" goes from cliché to credo. An experienced worldspeaker can talk to nearly anything and wring forgotten information from inanimate objects that others would not have thought capable of remembering.

Worldspeakers know that everything has a story. As they learn more about the world around them, they learn to speak successively subtler and more magical languages in an attempt to retrieve the stories hidden in every creature or object. When they reach the pinnacle of their class, they can talk to nearly any living thing, from dragon to slug, to the elements that make up the world, and even the bodies of the dead.

Worldspeakers don't often call attention to themselves as separate or distinct from whatever their base classes might be. Most find it easier to carry on their conversations without meddling from outsiders who have poorer communication skills. Keeping their abilities a secret also allows them to maintain an aura of mystery and superior knowledge. A few worldspeakers, however, flaunt their abilities. These few usually travel with powerful friends, since someone with secrets to hide is usually someone willing to do unpleasant things to keep them hidden.

Bards are the undeniable masters of the worldspeaker class, and few learn the class's secrets without doing at least a little time on the lute. This is not due to any elitism on a bard's part. Rather, the worldspeaker's dedication to obscure, even supernatural linguistics is so great that only those who make an intense study of language can begin to learn the ways.

Worldspeaker Class Features

All the following are class features of the worldspeaker prestige class.

WORLDSPEAKER Requirements

HIT DIE D6

To qualify to become a worldspeaker, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Concentration: 8 ranks.

Decipher Script: 8 ranks.

Knowledge (history): 4 ranks.

Knowledge (nature): 4 ranks.

Special: Must be able to speak, read, and write three languages that are not on the character's racial list of bonus languages.

WORLDSPEAKER Class Skills

The worldspeaker's class skills (and the key abilities for each) are:

Str: –

Dex: –

Con: Concentration.

Int: Craft, Decipher Script, Knowledge (any), Search, Spellcraft.

Wis: Listen, Sense Motive.

Cha: Bluff, Diplomacy, Handle Animal, Gather Information, Perform.

N/A: Speak Language.

Skill points at each level: 6 + Int modifier.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A worldspeaker gains no additional proficiency with any weapons or armor.

Bardic Knowledge: If the character already has the bardic knowledge ability, his worldspeaker levels stack with the levels of any other classes that grant him that ability for the purpose of determining the bonus.

Bardic Music: If the character already has the bardic music ability, her worldspeaker levels stack with the levels of any other classes that grant her that ability for the purpose of determining abilities, duration, and so on.

Spells per Day/Spells Known: At each worldspeaker level, the character gains new bard spells per day and spells known as if she had also gained a level in the bard class.

***Tongues* (Sp):** Once per day, a worldspeaker may speak as though under the effect of a *tongues* spell as cast by a 6th-level sorcerer.

***Animal Speech* (Sp):** At 2nd level, the worldspeaker has learned the speech of animals. At will he may speak as though under the effect of a *speak with animals* spell cast by a 5th-level druid.

***Plant Speech* (Sp):** At 3rd level, the worldspeaker has learned the speech of the plant kingdom. Three times per day, he may speak to plants as though under the effect of a *speak with plants* spell cast by a 5th-level druid.

Bardic Knowledge Bonus (Ex): Since a worldspeaker has so many opportunities to talk to unusual creatures, at 3rd level he gains a +2 bonus to bardic knowledge checks if he already has or gains the ability to make them.

***Mineral Speech* (Sp):** At 4th level, if the worldspeaker speaks Terran, he may speak with stones once per day as if under the effect of a *stone tell* spell cast by an 11th-level druid. As the sturdiest, most consistent of the four elements, this ability is separate from elemental speech below.

***Elemental Speech* (Sp):** Once per day at 4th-level, the worldspeaker may speak to one of the following elemental materials: air, fire, or water. She must speak the appropriate elemental language to do so (Auran, Ignan, or Aquan respectively). The duration of element speech is 1 minute.

All three elements are notoriously difficult conversationalists. A worldspeaker must succeed at a DC 20 Concentration check to focus and pull meaningful information out of the jumble of language an element conveys. As with *stone tell*, an element's perspective, perception, and knowledge might prevent the element from providing the details a worldspeaker is looking for (as determined by the DM).

Air is the most difficult element to talk to, as its ephemeral nature does not lend itself to collecting or retaining information. A worldspeaker can not speak intelligibly with air moving faster than a light wind. Within a half-mile radius, air can communicate the presence, approximate number, and size of breathing creatures of Small or greater size as well as the presence of objects of Gargantuan size or larger that air can reach. It cannot communicate information about anything underwater or underground where air cannot penetrate. Air can reliably forecast natural weather one day in advance.

Fire is often short-lived, and like air, has relatively little to tell. Fire can communicate how long it has been burning, and simple facts about anyone who lit the fire, passed within its light radius, or was burned by it. The fire can also reveal its fuel source.

Still bodies of water can relate facts about who or what has been in or

WORLDSPEAKER Class Features

Level	Base Attack	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day/ Spells Known
1st	+0	+2	+2	+2	Bardic knowledge, bardic music, *tongues*	+1 level of bard class
2nd	+1	+3	+3	+3	*Animal speech*	+1 level of bard class
3rd	+2	+3	+3	+3	Bardic knowledge bonus, *plant speech*	+1 level of bard class
4th	+3	+4	+4	+4	*Elemental speech, mineral speech*	+1 level of bard class
5th	+3	+4	+4	+4	*Grave speech*	+1 level of bard class

MOURNER Class Features

Level	Base Attack	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day/ Spells Known
1st	+0	+2	+2	+2	Bardic knowledge, bardic music	+1 level of bard class
2nd	+1	+3	+3	+3	Bright soul	+1 level of bard class
3rd	+2	+3	+3	+3	Peaceful slumber	+1 level of bard class
4th	+3	+4	+4	+4	Lament	+1 level of bard class
5th	+3	+4	+4	+4	Go gently	+1 level of bard class

drunk from them, as well as revealing the contents of their depths. Running water is too mobile to tell much useful information, although a worldspeaker can learn who stepped through or drank from the water upstream within the last 3d10 minutes, and can learn about a stream of water's source (its distance and any unusual facts about it). Precipitation and bodies of water with tides are overwhelming communicators. Information is so large and dispersed that it barely resembles speech. Water this dispersed can only relate the presence of creatures or objects that are Gargantuan size or larger within a two mile radius that the water touches.

***Grave Speech* (Sp):** At 5th level, worldspeakers learn the mystic arts of drawing information out of corpses. Once per day, a worldspeaker may talk to a corpse as if under the effect of a *speak with dead* spell cast by a 15th-level cleric.

The Mourner

Mourners use their musical gifts to honor the dead and ease the suffering of the living. Traveling from city to city and trained in all manner of funeral customs, mourners assist, and, when necessary, replace priests in the performance of last rites.

Mourners believe in the sanctity of burial and are sworn enemies of grave robbers and, especially, necromancers. They view non-intelligent undead as victims and use special bardic music abilities to restore their eternal slumber, but they mercilessly hunt and destroy intelligent undead.

All mourners have bardic backgrounds, with multiclass bard/clerics almost as common as single class bards.

Mourner Class Abilities

All the following are class features of the mourner prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A character becoming a mourner gains no additional proficiency in any weapon or armor for taking levels of the class.

Bardic Knowledge: If the character already has the bardic knowledge ability, her mourner levels stack with the levels of any other classes that grant her that ability for the purpose of determining the bonus, but only when making a bardic knowledge check that deals with funeral rites, undead, necromancy, or items associated with those topics.

Bardic Music: If the character already has the bardic music ability, her mourner levels stack with the levels of any other classes that grant her that ability for the purpose of determining abilities, duration, and so on.

Spells per Day/Spells Known: At each mourner level, the character gains new bard spells per day and spells known as if she had also gained a level in the bard class.

Bright Soul (Su): The mourner adds her Charisma bonus to all saves against necromancy spells and effects and all supernatural and spell-like abilities of undead.

Peaceful Slumber (Su): A 3rd-level mourner can use peaceful slumber to grant a corpse protection against reanimation. Peaceful slumber requires 1 use of the mourner's daily uses of bardic music and a Perform check. The mourner cannot take 20 on this check. The corpse then gains permanent spell resistance equal to the mourner's Perform skill check, but only against spells and spell-like abilities that speak with the dead, create undead, or raise or resurrect the

HIT DIE D6

MOURNER Requirements

To qualify to become a mourner, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Diplomacy: 8 ranks.

Knowledge (religion): 5 ranks.

Perform: 8 ranks.

Special: The character must have the bardic music ability.

MOURNER Class Skills

The mourner's class skills (and the key abilities for each) are:

Str: –

Dex: Hide, Move Silently.

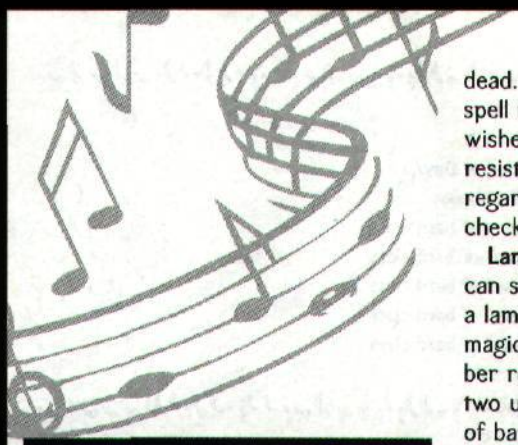
Con: Concentration.

Int: Craft, Decipher Script, Knowledge (any), Search, Spellcraft.

Wis: Listen, Profession, Sense Motive.

Cha: Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Perform.

Skill points at each level: 6 + Int modifier.



MEMORY SMITH Requirements

HIT DIE D8

To qualify to become a memory smith, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Any good.

Craft (weaponsmithing or armorsmithing): 5 ranks.

Knowledge (religion): 3 ranks.

Perform: 8 ranks.

Use Magic Device: 5 ranks.

Patron Deity: The character must worship Moradin before all other gods.

MEMORY SMITH Class Skills

The memory smith's class skills (and the key abilities for each) are:

Str: Climb.

Dex: Disable Device, Open Lock.

Con: Concentration.

Int: Appraise, Craft, Decipher Script, Knowledge (any), Search, Spellcraft.

Wis: Listen, Profession, Sense Motive, Spot.

Cha: Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Perform, Use Magic Device.

N/A: Speak Language.

Skill points at each level: 4 + Int modifier.

dead. A mourner may grant a corpse spell resistance as many times as he wishes, but each use resets the spell resistance granted to the corpse, regardless of whether the Perform check has a higher or lower result.

Lament (Su): A 4th-level mourner can stir an undead creature's soul with a lament to lost life laced with the magic of necromancy. Peaceful slumber requires a standard action and two uses of the mourner's daily uses of bardic music. All undead within a 30-foot radius centered on the mourner who fail a Will save (DC 10 + mourner level + bard level + Cha bonus) fall prone and are held immobile as by the spell *halt undead* cast by a cleric of the mourner's class level. This is a sonic effect.

Go Gently (Su): A 5th-level mourner can, in the round immediately following the use of the lament ability, sever the cords of negative energy that bind undead to the material plane. Go gently requires a Perform check and 1 use of the mourner's daily uses of bardic music. Any undead within 30 feet that failed to save against the lament are required to make a second Will save against the same DC. Non-intelligent undead that fail are destroyed, and intelligent undead take damage equal to the Perform skill check. Use of go gently constitutes an attack against the undead and frees them from the effects of lament.

MEMORY SMITH

In ancient times, when the dwarven kingdoms were young and strong, their smiths crafted armor and weapons of legendary power. Unlike the lesser craftsmen among humans and elves, who could only enhance steel by binding spells within it, the dwarves understood the true smith's art and, using chants said to have been first sung by Moradin Soul Forger himself, could awaken the latent magic that lives within all metal. For centuries, dwarves were the undisputed masters of hammer and anvil, but endless wars with the goblin hordes sent their empires into slow decline and much of the ancient skill was lost—much, but not all.

Memory smiths are dwarves dedicated to recovering and reestablishing the lost arts of the ancients. To date, they have had much success; scouring old tomes and exploring the ruins of once great dwarven holds, they have unearthed secrets thought gone forever. Still, much work remains. Although many of Moradin's chants have been recovered, some of the most potent have yet to be found.

Most memory smiths are single class bards, their mastery of voice and wide breadth of knowledge is essential to mastering the old ways. Others are multi-class fighter/bards, using their abilities to punish the traditional enemies of the dwarven race, or cleric/bards, who see the abilities of the memory smith as a natural extension of their dedication to the Soul Forger.

Memory Smith Class Abilities

All the following are class features of the memory smith prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A character becoming a memory smith gains proficiency in all simple weapons and all martial axes, hammers, and picks. A memory smith is also proficient with all armors (heavy, medium, and light) and with shields, including the tower shield.

Bardic Knowledge: If the character already has the bardic knowledge abil-

MEMORY SMITH Class Features

Level	Base Attack	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day/ Spells Known
1st	+1	+2	+0	+2	Bardic knowledge, bardic music, spell smith (*endure elements, magic weapon*)	+1 level of bard class
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+3	Spell smith (*align weapon, make whole*)	+1 level of bard class
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+3	Spell smith (*keen edge, magic vestment*)	+1 level of bard class
4th	+4	+4	+1	+4	Spell smith (*divine power, greater magic weapon*)	+1 level of bard class
5th	+5	+4	+1	+4	Spell smith (*disrupting weapon, fabricate*)	+1 level of bard class

ity, his memory smith levels stack with the levels of any other classes that grant her that ability for the purpose of determining the bonus, but only when making checks about weapons, armor, or other items crafted of metal.

Bardic Music: If the character already has the bardic music ability, his memory smith levels stack with the levels of any other classes that grant her that ability for the purpose of determining abilities, duration, and so on.

Spells per Day/Spells Known: At each memory smith level, the character gains new bard spells per day and spells known as if he had also gained a level in the bard class.

Spell Smith (Ex): Each level of memory smith adds new spells to his bard spells known list. The memory smith casts these spells exactly as a bard casts arcane spells. A spell's level is equal to the class level at which the memory smith added the spell to his bard spell list. For example, when the memory smith gains *keen edge* at third level, he adds *keen edge* to his bard spells known list as a 3rd-level bard spell. See the Memory Smith Class Features sidebar for a list of what spells are gained.

Battle Howler of Gruumsh

Gruumsh One Eye bestowed on his chosen people many great gifts: strength, fortitude, courage, and boundless hunger for conquest. What he didn't rant were good singing ability or sparkling wit. Despite this, the bardic tradition is alive and well in orc culture, albeit in crude form.

Battle howlers of Gruumsh give mortal voice to their god's fury. At the forefront of every conflict, a battle howler's hoarse war cries incite his allies to incredible heights of fury and fortifies their courage. The most accomplished battle howlers can even channel Gruumsh's throbbing heartbeat, a sound that terrifies even the bravest opponents.

Most battle howlers of Gruumsh are half-orcs. Even so, the path of the bard is a difficult one, and few orcs or half-orcs remain bards for their entire career. Most battle howlers are bard/barbarians, as their abilities complement each other nicely. A rare few also spend time as clerics, their warrior's zeal giving them a true link to the divine.

Battle HowlerClass Abilities

All the following are class features of the battle howler prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A character becoming a battle howler gains proficiency in all simple and martial weapons and also with all armors (heavy, medium, and light) and with shields (except the tower shield).

Bardic Music: If the character already has the bardic music ability, her battle howler levels stack with the levels of any other classes that grant her that ability for the purpose of determining abilities, duration, and so on.

Spells per Day/Spells Known: At each battle howler level, the character gains new bard spells per day (and spells known, if applicable) as if she had also gained a level in the bard class. She does not, however, gain any other benefit of the bard class.

Rage (Ex): This ability functions exactly as the barbarian ability of the same name. If the battle howler already has the rage ability from some other class, the times per day that the rage ability can be used stack.

War Cry (Su): When a battle howler uses the inspire courage ability of bardic music, it affects all allies within 60 feet and the morale bonuses it provides are increased by +1.

Howling Rage (Ex): At 4th level, a battle howler can use the bardic music abilities inspire courage, inspire greatness, and inspire heroics while raging, provided she has access to them.

Green Whisperer

Nature speaks and the green whisperer listens. The green whisperer is attuned to nature and the wisdom of animals. They spend time in the wildest corners of the world, humming soft lullabies for an adoring audience of birds, beasts, and flowers. A green

HIT DIE D8

BATTLE HOWLER Requirements

To qualify to become a battle howler, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Any chaotic.

Knowledge (religion): 2 ranks.

Perform: 8 ranks.

Feats: Cleave, Power Attack.

Patron Deity: The character must worship Gruumsh before all other gods.

BATTLE HOWLER Class Skills

The battle howler's class skills (and the key abilities for each) are:

Str: Climb, Jump, Swim.

Dex: Balance, Ride.

Con: Concentration.

Int: Appraise, Craft, Knowledge (any), Search, Spellcraft.

Wis: Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, Survival.

Cha: Handle Animal, Intimidate, Perform.

Skill points at each level: 4 + Int modifier.

BATTLE HOWLER Class Features

Level	Base Attack	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day/ Spells Known
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Bardic music	+1 level of bard class
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Rage 1/day	+1 level of bard class
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	War cry	+1 level of bard class
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Howling rage	+1 level of bard class
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Rage 2/day	+1 level of bard class

GREEN WHISPERER Requirements

To qualify to become a green whisperer, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Any neutral.

Knowledge (nature): 8 ranks.

Perform: 8 ranks.

Survival: 5 ranks.

GREEN WHISPERER Class Skills

The green whisperer's class skills (and the key abilities for each) are:

Str: Climb, Jump, Swim.

Dex: Balance, Ride.

Con: Concentration.

Int: Craft, Knowledge (nature), Search, Spellcraft.

Wis: Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, Survival.

Cha: Handle Animal, Perform.

Skill points at each level: 4 + Int modifier.

whisperer tends to be introspective and is more comfortable in the presence of unspoiled nature than in the depths of a dungeon. Still, they are not immune to the lure of adventure, and most share the bard's much storied wanderlust.

Most green whisperers are multiclass bard/druids. The majority of green whisperers are human, elven, or half-elven, but members of other races are by no means excluded.

Green Whisperer Class Abilities

All the following are class features of the green whisperer prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A character becoming a green whisperer gains no additional proficiency in any weapon or armor for taking levels of the class.

Bardic Knowledge: If the character already has the bardic knowledge ability, his green whisperer levels stack with the levels of any other classes that grant him that ability for the purpose of determining the bonus, but only when making a bardic knowledge check about something involving plants, animals, the elements, or items associated with those topics.

Bardic Music: If the character already has the bardic music ability, his green whisperer levels stack with the levels of any other classes that grant him that ability for the purpose of determining abilities, duration, and so on.

Spells per Day/Spells Known: At each green whisperer level, the character gains new bard and new druid spells per day (and spells known, if applicable) as if she had also gained a level in the bard and the druid classes. He does not, however, gain any other benefit of the druid class.

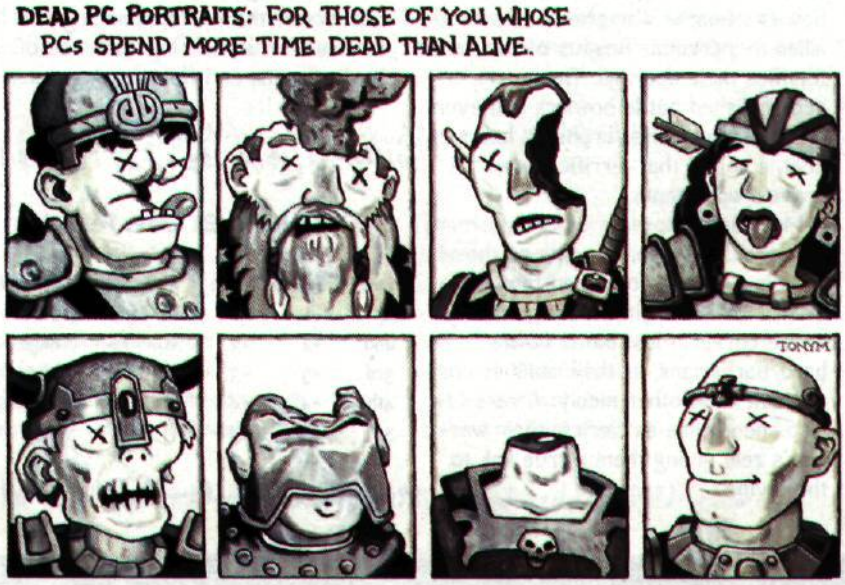
Soothe the Savage Beast (Ex): Creatures of the animal and magical beast types suffer a -2 penalty on all saves against the green whisperer's *fascinate, suggestion,* and *mass suggestion* uses of bardic music.

Green Ear (Su): A 5th-level green whisperer's mind-affecting bardic music abilities affect creatures of the plant type.

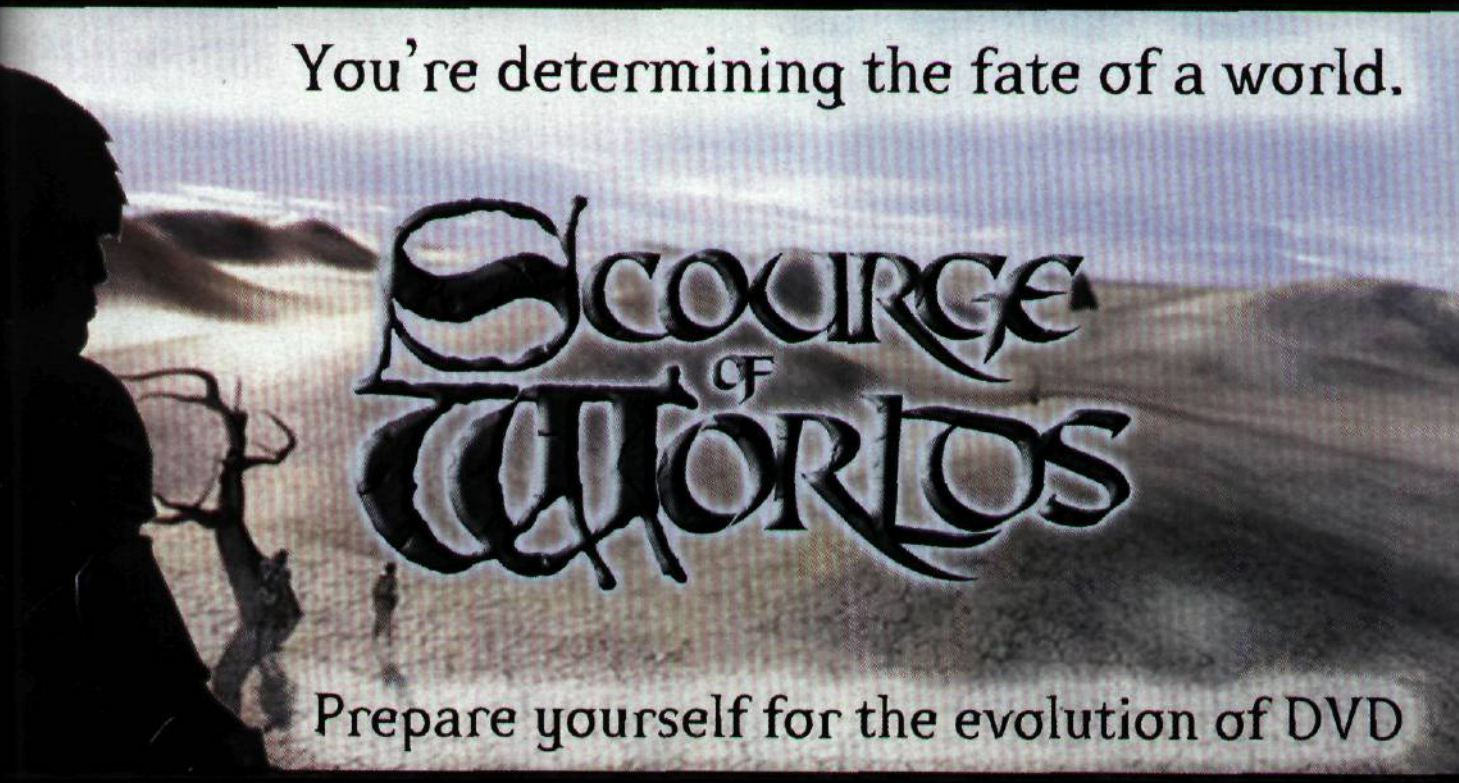
GREEN WHISPERER Class Features

HIT DIE D6

Level	Base Attack	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day/ Spells Known
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Bardic knowledge, bardic music	+1 level of bard and druid class
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3		+1 level of bard and druid class
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+3	Sooth the savage beast	+1 level of bard and druid class
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4		+1 level of bard and druid class
5th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Green ear	+1 level of bard and druid class



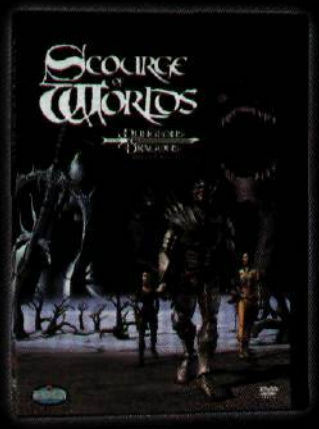
You aren't just controlling the plot of a movie...



A

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

ADVENTURE



Unlike anything you've ever experienced, Scourge Of Worlds is a revolutionary concept in DVD technology — a completely CGI-animated film that allows you to guide the story at crucial points, creating the adventure of a lifetime.

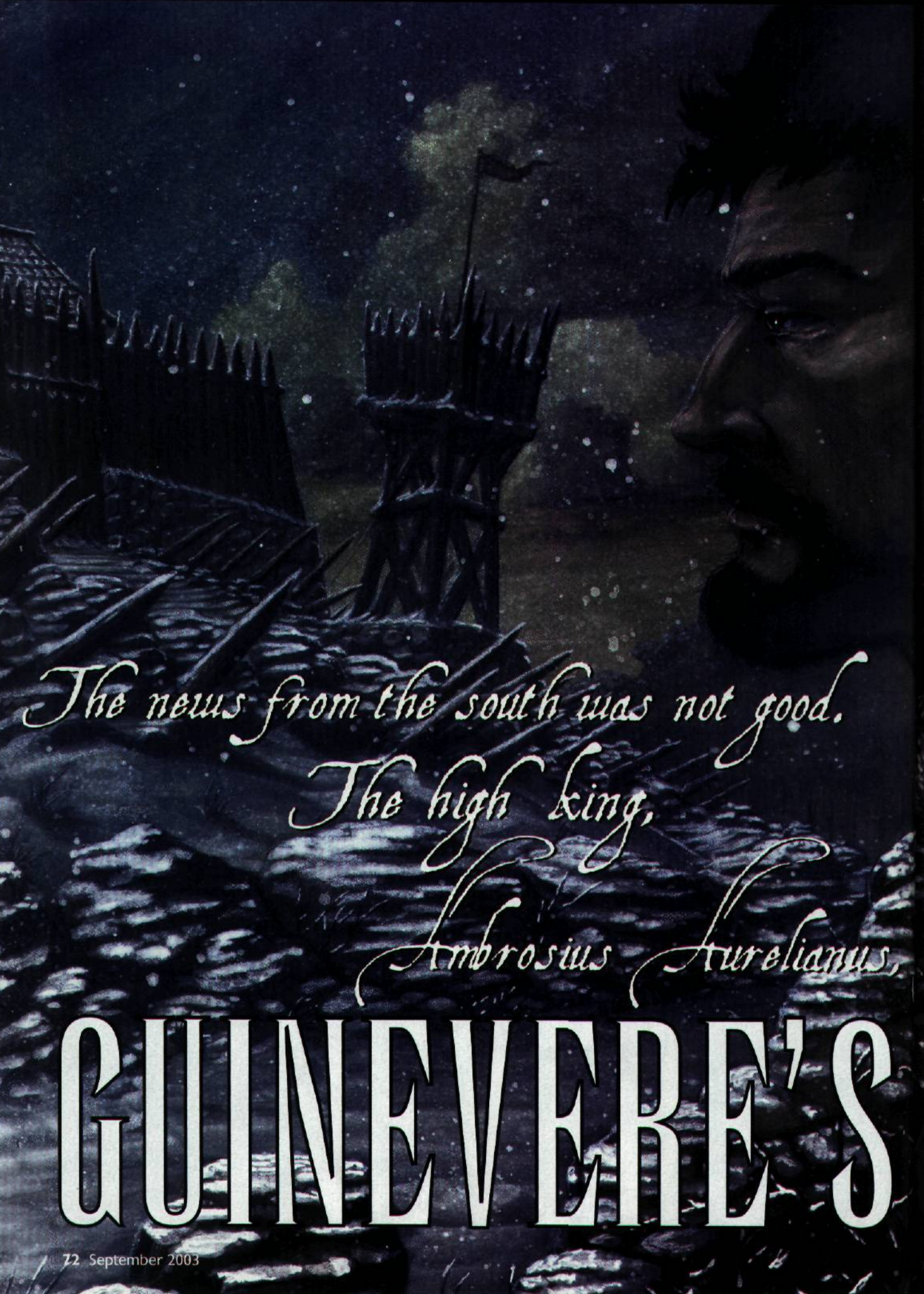
The decisions you make control the destiny of the characters as you guide them through over 900 possible fates. The choices are yours, but the consequences affect millions.
Are you ready for the challenge?

AVAILABLE JUNE 10 WHEREVER DVDS ARE SOLD
OR AT WWW.RHINO.COM

www.scourgeofworlds.com

RHINOMATION

Dungeons & Dragons®, the Dungeons & Dragons logo and the Wizards of the Coast logo are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and used under license. All rights reserved. Package Artwork & Design © 2003 Rhino Home Video, an AOL Time Warner Company. All Rights Reserved.


The news from the south was not good.
The high king,
Ambrosius Aurelianus,

GUINEVERE'S

by Ben Bova Illustrated by Michael Phillippi

had fallen ill, and Merlin had disappeared.

FATE

Arthur's army was heading south once more, after trouncing the wild tribes of the north and staving off an invasion threatened by the Danes in Berenicia. Now we sought to escape the worst of the long, cold, wet, and dreary northern winter. Southward we plodded. Knights, squires, footmen, churls and camp followers, long lines of men mounted and afoot, horses and oxcarts, all slowly threading our way through the bare trees and brown hills of the empty countryside toward the warmer clime of the south and Ambrosius' great stone castle at Cadbury.

Twice we had been attacked, not by invading barbarians but by our own Celtic people, brigands who fell upon small groups of our men when they were away from the main column.

Lancelot was leading a small hunting party, scouring the hilly countryside for game to bring back to the cook pots, when bandits tried to ambush us. Arthur had commanded me to go with Lancelot because I had gained a reputation as a good hunter. My namesake, Orion, was famed as a hunter. We were afoot, looking for signs of deer, when they came screaming fiercely out of the woods, armed with swords and staves.

One of the squires went down while the others ran back toward Lancelot, who already had his sword in hand. The youngest of Arthur's knights, barely old enough to have the wisp of a beard starting on his chin, Lancelot must have looked like an inexperienced boy to the bandits. What a mistake!

He stood his ground, without shield or helmet, as the squires ran back toward him. I stood at his side, grasping my own sword, every nerve in my body tingling with the anticipation of battle. I had been created to be a warrior, and my senses speed up whenever I am in a fight.

But there was no need for that this day. Lancelot waited until the bandits were almost upon him, then drove forward like a hurricane of death. Almost faster than my eyes could follow, he cut down the first two brigands that reached him. His sword was a blur as he hacked the life out of two more. Four of them tried to circle behind him, but I slashed the arm off one of them and the others turned and ran.

It was all finished in a few heartbeats. Lancelot stood among the corpses, his sword sheathed in blood, not even breathing hard.

Arthur was not happy with our report.

"Britons attacked you?" he asked Lancelot.

"Aye, my lord. Hungry men, from the looks of them. God knows this countryside has been picked bare. There isn't a deer or a even a boar anywhere around here."

Arthur rubbed his bearded chin. "If they're starving, they'll attack again. We'll have to be on our guard each step of the way."

.....

Portly, red-faced Friar Samson rode beside Arthur each morning, praising his victories as God's will and urging Arthur to cleanse the land of the pagan invaders. Arthur listened respectfully, even though Samson could become pompous in his pronouncements. On the morning after still another bandit attack, after patiently listening to Samson's droning lecture, Arthur asked the priest to see to the souls of the footmen trudging along the trail behind us.

The friar's face flashed anger for a moment, then he meekly bowed his tonsured head and turned his horse back away from the knights.

Gawain trotted up beside Arthur. "Had enough of piety for one cold morning, eh?"

Arthur said nothing.

"Why so downcast?" asked Gawain, riding alongside Arthur. "Those bandits were nothing more than a pack of knaves, Britons or no."

"Hungry knaves," Arthur replied glumly. "Look at the land around us."

I could see what he meant. For many days we had ridden through devastation. Since the Romans had abandoned Britain, barbaric invaders from across the seas had invaded the island, burning, raping, looting, and killing. Towns that had once been peaceful and prosperous were now blackened with fire, abandoned, their people flown or dead. Farm fields stood bleak and fallow, abandoned by peasant and lord alike. The land lay gray and barren, crushed by the endless wars.

Since the Romans had abandoned Britain, barbaric invaders from across the seas had invaded the island . . .

The countryside was so bare that Arthur had to split his army into four separate columns as we worked our way southward so that we could find some fodder for our mounts. The foragers came back to camp each night with meager pickings; many days they found nothing at all. Even I, mighty hunter that I had been created to be, could find only an occasional half-starved rabbit. Deer and larger game had long since been devoured.

What was even worse than the invading Saxons and Jutes and Angles was the fact that each petty Celtic king made war against the kings around him. Where once they had given at least a nominal obeisance to Ambrosius Aurelianus as High King, now they fought each other while the invading barbarians established their own kingdoms along the coasts.

"I had thought to drive out the barbarians," Arthur said so softly that I—riding behind him as a squire should—could barely hear his somber voice.

"We will," said Gawain lightly. "Next spring, once the weather clears."

"And who will till the fields?" Arthur asked bitterly. "Who will build new houses? Who will make the land green and prosperous again?"

Gawain laughed. "That's peasant's work, not fit for a knight to dirty his hands with."

He spurred his mount and trotted up ahead, to where Lancelot was riding point, alert now for ambushers along the trail, leaving Arthur to plod along in somber silence.

"I wish Merlin were here," he muttered, more to himself than me.

"You don't need Merlin anymore, my lord," I said, nosing my mount to plod alongside him on his right, the side that would be unprotected by his shield in battle.

"Perhaps not," he said, with a rueful smile. "But I'd feel better if he were here."

I smiled back at him, knowing that Merlin was in reality one of the Creators, those godlike beings from the far future of this time who toy with human fate for their own amusement.

We would not beat the winter, I realized. Later in the day it began to snow softly, quietly, as the pale sun dipped low behind the silver-gray clouds that had blanketed the sky all afternoon. Silently the wet flakes drifted down through the calm, cold air, frigid as death. I have never liked snow, not since I had been killed by a cave bear in the bone-cracking cold of the Ice Age, many lifetimes ago.

"We'll have to camp up there," Arthur said, standing in his stirrups and pointing to a grove of deeply green yews off to the side of the trail. The woods climbed up the slope of the hills. A good place for an ambush, I thought.

That evening we were attacked again. Most of the knights and squires were dismounted, huddled around meager fires, shivering in their jerkins and cloaks as they waited for the evening meal.

"Where're the cook wagons?" Sir Bors growled. "They should be here by now."

Arthur turned to me. "Find them and hurry them here, Orion."

With an obedient nod I replied, "Yes, my lord."

Yet I did not like to leave Arthur's side. I knew that Aten and others among the Creators were plotting his death, and I had vowed to protect the young *dux bellorum*. Arthur was Ambrosius' battle leader; he had spent the summer driving the invading Jutes and Angles back to their seaside encampments while Ambrosius sat at Cadbury castle keeping a wary eye on the southern Saxons, whom Arthur had humbled before campaigning northward.

Now Ambrosius was dying, if the word from the south could be believed. Many among the knights were already muttering among themselves that Arthur should be the next king. That is why the Creators wanted him killed.

The Creators thought of themselves as gods, yet I knew they were the descendants of human beings from the far future. They had godlike powers, true enough. Aten had created me to be his warrior, his assassin, his hunter. I had killed for him many times on missions of battle and death. Through the ages of time and space I had done Aten's bidding, learning to hate his smug superiority, his mad obsession with dominating spacetime and forcing the human race to obey his will. Many times I had died painfully, yet he restored me to send me on yet another mission of blood and murder.

Aten had sent me to Britain in this dark age to assassinate young Arthur, to prevent him from bringing the petty British kingdoms together and building a Celtic empire that would stretch from Ireland to the long rivers and frozen marshes of Russia. I refused to kill Arthur. Instead, I protected him against Aten's schemes.

So now I rode a tired steed through the dark, snowy evening, searching for the kitchen train that should have caught up with the main body of our column an hour ago.

I saw the flicker of flames through the black boles of the leafless trees. Urging my mount forward, I began to hear the shouts and curses of men fighting. And dying.

The kitchen wagons were strung along the trail, two of them ablaze, churls and cooks desperately trying to defend themselves against men attacking from both sides of the trail. Most of the kitchen workers were huddled beneath the wagons, a few on their roofs, fighting with knives and meat hooks, swinging heavy iron pots like clubs, using whatever they could lay their hands on as weapons.

My senses went into overdrive, as they always do when I go into battle. Aten had built that capability into me. As I drew my sword and spurred my horse into a charge, I saw that the attackers were hardly better armed than their victims. They looked to be young men, boys even, fighting with staves and hunting knives for the most part. A few of them had bows, and they were standing off to the far side of the trail, trying to pick off the men fighting from atop the wagons.

I slashed into them, my sword ripping the nearest one into a geysering fountain of blood. The next one fell, his head severed . . .

With the loudest, most ferocious yell I could muster I charged the bowmen. They whirled to face me. To my hyper-alert senses their movements seemed sluggish, languid, like men moving through molasses. In the lurid light of the flaming wagons I saw their eyes widen as I charged at them. Two of them pulled arrows from the quivers at their hips and began to pull their bow strings back.

They both got off their shots before I could reach them. I saw the arrows floating lazily through the snowy air, spinning as they flew. I had neither shield nor helmet with me, even my coat of chain mail lay bundled in the pack behind my saddle. The first arrow I flicked away with my sword but the second hit my horse in the neck. I felt him stumble as I swung one leg over the saddle and leaped to the ground a scant few feet in front of the bowmen.

They were all nocking arrows, but they were far too slow to save themselves. I slashed into them, my sword ripping the nearest one into a geysering fountain of blood. The next one fell, his head severed from his shoulders, and the others dropped their bows and ran.

I turned to the footmen battling the kitchen help hand-to-hand. They were totally unprepared for a swordsman, and I was no ordinary fighter. Within minutes they were running, howling, into the snow-filled night. My sword dripped with their blood.

The men who had ducked under the wagons scrambled out now and got to their feet. Friar Samson was among them, his rough homespun robe caked with snow and dirt.

"God sent us a deliverer!" he cried. His barrel-chested build gave him a voice powerful enough to fill a cathedral. "On your knees, all of you, and give thanks!"

I said nothing, but I thought of Aten and the other self-styled gods. If Samson knew that they were deciding his fate, playing with the human race the way mortals play at chess, I wonder what he would think of his God?

Once up from their knees, the kitchen men turned into fierce warriors now that the enemy was beaten, and began to cheerfully slit the throats of the poor fools who lay in the snow wounded and too weak to defend themselves. Friar Samson ignored the slaughter, but I stopped them, yanking one of the butchers off the back of a screaming, crying boy who could have been no more than twelve or thirteen.

"We'll march these prisoners back to Arthur," I commanded. "Let him decide their fate."

Reluctantly, they allowed me to take the two youths who were still alive and able to walk. I walked with them, after giving my downed horse a merciful thrust through the heart.

The knights and squires roared with approval when the kitchen wagons creaked into camp. Arthur, though, sat grimly on a fallen log as I explained to him what happened. Bors, standing to one side with his burly arms folded across his chest, looked ready to hang both prisoners.

I could feel the dagger that Odysseus had given me, ages ago at Troy, pressing iron cold against my thigh where I kept it . . .

At last Arthur turned to the two wounded youths. One of them had been stabbed in the arm, the other's face was swollen on one side, where a kitchen churl had banged him with a skillet.

The youths sank to their knees before Arthur. He wore only a plain rough tunic over his chain mail, but Excalibur gleamed in its jeweled scabbard by his side, and it was clear to them that this young warrior with the soft brown beard and sad eyes was a man of authority, even though Arthur was not that many years older than they.

"Why do you attack us?" Arthur demanded. "We are fighting the invaders to protect you. Is this the thanks you give?"

"Hunger, sire," answered the smaller of the two. His voice cracked, whether from puberty or fear I could not tell.

"Our village is in ruins," the older one said, a smoldering trace of resentment in his deeper voice. "You have much; we have nothing."

"You have a dozen dead friends," Bors growled, "if Orion's story is to be believed."

"Two of them were our brothers," replied the younger one, his face downcast.

Arthur shook his head. "Orion, find Kay. Tell him to send these two back to their village, or what's left of it. Let each of them take as much food as they can carry."

Bors' eyes popped. He started to object, but Arthur forestalled him with an upraised hand.

"We are not your enemies," he told the youths. "War has ravaged the land. We are trying to drive out the invaders so that we can all live in peace once again."

I took the prisoners to Kay and explained Arthur's decision. Kay looked dubious and reluctant, but he piled both youth's arms with food from the nearest wagon. The boys scampered away, despite their wounds, staggering slightly under their loads.

As I watched them disappear into the snowy darkness, I thought that Arthur knew how to be a king. If he lived long enough, he might indeed bring peace to this troubled land.

I wrapped myself in a thick, rough blanket and leaned my back against one of the yew trees. I had volunteered to stand watch because I need little sleep. Another of the superior abilities that Aten had given me. He had built me to be a warrior, with all the strength and blood lust that a killer requires. Yet I was sick of killing, tired of the endless wheel of death and blood.

The piercing cold of the winter night began to seep through the blanket. Without consciously thinking of it, I clamped down on the blood vessels close to my skin, to keep my body's interior warmth from escaping. Still, the bitter cold and the wet flakes of snow chilled me. I unbuckled my sword and leaned it against the trunk of the tree. I could feel the dagger that Odysseus had given me, ages ago at Troy, pressing iron cold against my thigh where I kept it strapped beneath my tunic.

All I really cared for was Anya, the gray-eyed goddess whom the ancient Greeks knew as Athena. She was the only one among the Creators who truly cared for the human beings that her fellow Creators used as puppets. I loved Anya, a desperate, foolish passion that roused the jealousy of Aten, that egomaniac. She loved me, too. As impossible as it seems, this goddess, this Creator, loved me just as I loved her. Time after time, in the frozen wastes of the Ice Age and the temperate Paradise of the Neolithic, in the Macedonia of Alexander the Great and the far-flung interstellar empire of the Fourth Millennium, Anya had loved me and tried to protect me from the cruel whims of Aten and the other Creators.

As I sat in the cold, snowy woods, with the camp fires dying down to smoldering ashes, I thought of Anya. Aten and the other Creators tried to keep us apart, but she had come to me here, in Arthur's time. She had helped us. Arthur called her the Lady of the Lake. I knew her to be my love.

I saw a glow deep in the woods, just a tiny pinpoint of light but it didn't flicker as a fire would. It was as steady as a shining star. And growing brighter.

I jumped to my feet, the blanket falling from my shoulders. Snow was still sifting silently through the night; the green branches of yews were decked with white, bending under the growing weight of the snow.

And the light was getting brighter, coming closer.

Anya! I hoped. Could it be her?

"Not your precious Anya," called a deeply resonant male voice. "She has no time for you now."

He stepped out from the trees and I could see that it was the Creator who called himself Hades. They enjoyed giving themselves names of classical gods and goddesses. This one styled himself after the ancient Greek lord of the underworld. He was tall and broad of shoulder, cloaked in a magnificent mantle as black as infinite space, threaded with finest traceries of blood red. His hair and close-cropped beard were dark, his eyes darker still, like polished onyx.

"I understand that Arthur misses his old mentor, Merlin," said Hades.

Merlin was in reality Hades, appearing in disguise to guide Arthur in his youth. Aten and most of the other Creators wanted Arthur killed, so he could not interfere with their grandiose plans for a barbarian empire that would keep humankind enslaved for millennia. Hades had opposed them originally, but now was moving toward their camp.

"You swore that you wouldn't interfere."

Hades smiled cruelly. "A promise made to a creature? How will you keep me to it, Orion? You can't even move your fingertips."

It was true. I stood frozen like a block of ice, totally under his control.

"But you can feel pain," Hades said.

Suddenly my chest constricted in white-hot agony. I couldn't cry out, couldn't even breathe. My legs were too weak to hold me up. I toppled like a felled tree onto the cold snowy ground.

Suddenly my chest constricted in white-hot agony. I couldn't cry out, couldn't even breathe. My legs were too weak to hold me up.

Hades bent low and whispered to me. "Merlin will see Arthur one more time, Orion, whether you like it or not. At the castle of his foster father, Ector. Make certain that Arthur goes there, Orion. Elsewise, this little pang I've given you will feel like a love tap."

The pain ebbed. I lay gasping on the snowy ground as Hades drew himself up to his full height and turned away, laughing softly to himself.

Rage filled me. Despite the lingering pain I lunged at his retreating back, whipping out Odysseus' dagger as I leaped. I hit his body with a satisfying thud and we both fell to the ground. Before he could think, I had the dagger's point under his chin. His eyes went wide as I pressed it deep enough to draw blood.

"Once you take human form you too can feel pain," I snarled. "You can feel death."

And then he was gone. Vanished. I lay alone on the wet cold snow, my dagger in hand, my anger melting into helpless frustration. I drove the dagger into the snow hard enough to penetrate the frozen ground beneath.

"That was foolhardy, Orion."

I turned over onto my back, and Anya stood above me, splendid in white fur that reached to her booted feet. A hint of a smile curved her beautiful lips slightly. Her gray eyes were serious, though, almost solemn.

"You cannot kill a Creator, Orion," she said calmly. "You know that."

Scrambling to my feet I replied, "I can frighten him, though. The terror in his eyes was worth the pain he inflicted on me."

Anya shook her head like a schoolteacher disappointed with her pupil. "Orion, my love, no matter how they provoke you, you must remember that many lives are at stake here. You must think of Arthur and all the others you have sworn to help and protect."

I nodded meekly. "Hades intends to see Arthur in his guise as Merlin."

"At Ector's castle, I know," she replied.

"Is it a trap?" I asked. "Do they intend to assassinate Arthur there?"

"No," Anya replied. "But it will be a test. Both you and Arthur will face a test that will be crucial to the unfolding of this line of spacetime."

"At Ector's castle."

"Yes. In Wales. Up in the mountains."

"But we're heading south, for Cadbury. The High King is ill. Dying."

"You must bring Arthur to Wales, Orion. To the country where he grew up as a boy."

"And the High King?"

"Trust me, Orion." Anya's image was fading, flickering in the dim light of the fading camp fires.

"Don't leave me!"

"I must, my darling. I don't want to, but I must." She became as dim and misty as a ghost.

"Wait! Please!"

"There is too much for me to do, Orion. I cannot stay."

She faded into nothingness, leaving me standing in the snow with my dagger in one hand and my heart as empty as the most distant stretches of outer space.

Why? I raged to myself. *Why can't we be together? The Creators manipulate space and time as easily as you or I walk across a room. Why can't Anya be with me? How can she truly love me when we're kept apart?*

Then, in the deepest cavern of my mind I heard Aten's sneering laughter. It is he who keeps us apart, I realized. Him and his fellow Creators. My fists clenched and I longed for the day when I would destroy them all.

It wasn't difficult to get Arthur to move into the mountains of Wales. Obviously we were not going to outrun the winter; snow and biting gales swept over us, day after day.

"We used to go sledding down these hills, Kay and I," Arthur was saying, smiling happily for the first time in many weeks. "We'd steal shields from the armory hall and ride them in the snow."

It was a bright, clear morning when we saw Ector's castle standing atop a steep hill, its watchtower silhouetted against the crisp blue sky. The storms had moved away, the air was bitingly cold but as clear as polished crystal. Arthur trotted up ahead, Lancelot and his foster-brother Kay at his side, men and horses puffing steamy clouds of breath into the cold morning. I stayed slightly behind them, as a humble

squire should. But I scanned the woods on either side of the climbing trail, alert for danger.

Ector was Arthur's foster father. Merlin had brought the infant to him, and Ector had raised Arthur to the strong young man he was now, with his own son, Kay, as Arthur's playmate and brother. None of us knew who Arthur's true father was, although Ambrosius accepted the youth as his own nephew, knighted him, and made him his *dux bellorum,* battle leader.

All the scheming politics and blood-soaked battles seemed far from Arthur's mind as he spurred his mount up the final turn of the trail that ended at the castle gate. Like many of the castles of this dark age, Ector's castle Wroxeter stood near the ruins of a Roman city, Viroconium. We had passed the city, down in the valley below: its crumbling dark stone walls had awed Arthur's knights, even frightened some of them.

"No human hands could have built such walls," I heard someone mutter behind me. "This must have been the work of giants."

"Or wizards," half-whispered another voice.

I merely shook my head. Ordinary men had built those stone walls. Other ordinary men had put the town to the torch, gutted its stately homes and public edifices, hauled away many of the stones for their own buildings.

I could see his eyes clearly beneath their shaggy gray brows: They were the eyes of Hades, black and glittering . . .

Part of Ector's castle was stone, I saw. The base of its outer wall was a haphazard collection of stones scavenged from the Roman town. Atop it was a stout wooden palisade, with a slightly leaning wooden watchtower flanking the main gate. Very few castles were entirely built of stone at this time. Morganna's keep in Berenicia was stone, although the other buildings inside its walls were wood and even wattle. The High King's headquarters at Cadbury was the wonder of its age; walls, buildings, towers, even the stables were solid stone.

As Arthur and his retinue came up to the castle gate, a helmeted head appeared at the tower top and called, "Who approaches the castle of Sir Ector?"

Sir Kay stood in his stirrups and proclaimed, "His son, Sir Kay, with his foster brother, Arthur, *dux bellorum* to the High King."

It took no small time, but eventually a wizened, white-bearded face appeared at the tower's top. "Kay? And Arthur? Have my boys truly come home?"

"Yes, Father!" Arthur shouted happily. "I've come home."

.....

Ector appeared overjoyed to see his son and foster son once again. He welcomed us personally as we rode through the castle gate and dismounted onto the packed earth of the courtyard. Arthur towered over the old man, but he stooped down and embraced his foster father with all the warmth of a son's love.

Friar Samson insisted on offering a mass of thanksgiving for our safe arrival at Wroxeter castle; we had little choice but to participate there in the cold morning, heads bowed in pious respect. All the other knights knelt on the snow-covered ground, together with most of the squires. I stood to one side, watching to make certain no one knifed Arthur while he prayed.

At last the knights were shown to quarters in the largest structure of the castle, each attended by one squire. Arthur chose me to accompany him, for which I was grateful. All the others of the army had to camp outside the castle's main wall.

As soon as we were settled, a page appeared at Arthur's open door and announced that Sir Ector would receive Arthur and his knights in the great hall, downstairs.

Ector's great hall was not as big as I had expected, although it was well timbered and its earthen floor pounded smooth and swept clean. The old man sat in a high-backed wooden chair next to the enormous fireplace that covered one entire wall of the room. Big enough for half a dozen men to sit in, the fireplace had only a meager fire crackling in it, sending gray smoke up the wide stone chimney.

Ector's wrinkled, white-bearded face was wreathed in smiles. "Tonight we will feast," he said in a high, piping voice as Arthur strode up to him. "But now, I have a surprise for you!"

He turned in his chair toward a curtained doorway. Merlin stepped through.

He appeared older than Ector, with a beard the color of ashes that ran all the way down to his belt and long gray hair that flowed past his shoulders. He looked newly scrubbed and combed; often enough I had seen him as mangy as a bedraggled alley cat. This day he wore a handsome robe of midnight blue decked with glittering stars that fell in soft folds down to the floor. Its hem was richly trimmed with fur, as was its collar and the cuffs of the wide sleeves. Despite his seeming years he stood erect and walked with a purposeful stride to stand beside Ector's chair. I could see his eyes clearly beneath their shaggy gray brows: They were the eyes of Hades, black and glittering like two chips of flint.

"Merlin!" Arthur exclaimed, sheer joy on his face. "They told me you had disappeared."

In a soft, quavering voice that matched his graybeard's disguise, Merlin replied, "I left Cadbury castle to meet you here, Arthur."

"You must have flown like the hawk of your namesake," Arthur said, awed.

Merlin replied archly, "I did not walk that long distance, true enough."

"But how did you know I'd be here?" Arthur gaped. "I didn't decide to come here myself until—" Then he stopped, grinning foolishly. "Oh. Of course. You knew it all along, didn't you?"

Merlin smiled benignly, but his eyes remained cold and remorseless. He glanced at me, and my blood turned to ice.

Is he here to assassinate Arthur? I wondered. And if he is, how could I possibly stop him?

That night Ector feasted Arthur and his knights. Sir Kay sat at one side of the old man, Arthur on the other. The wine was thin and slightly sour, but nobody seemed to mind. Mead and beer were there in abundance. Soon the men were throwing chunks of meat and even whole chickens across the table, laughing uproariously with each greasy-fingered toss, each spill of a mug across the planks of the long table.

I sat down among the other squires, far from the roaring blaze in the fireplace and the noisy, brawling men. I could never get drunk. My metabolism burned off alcohol almost as quickly as I could swallow the stuff. It made me warm enough to perspire heavily, though, despite my distance from the fireplace.

I noticed that Lancelot touched nothing but water, although he ate as heartily as any of the others. Gawain, Bors, and even Kay got uproariously drunk. I could have knifed all of them, I thought, before any of them realized what was happening. Arthur, though, remained sober enough. And so did Ector, although he laughed wheezingly at the knights' antics so hard I thought he would choke.

"... your father was Uther Pendragon, he who was king over much of this land. He who kept the Saxons in check..."

Merlin did not attend the feast. I thought I knew why. The rowdy merriment of mere mortals probably disgusted him. So be it, I thought, noticing that Friar Samson also was not present, and probably for much the same reason.

By the time the fire had gone down to smoldering, smoky ashes and most of the knights were snoring, their heads lolling on their shoulders or resting peacefully on the beer-soaked planks of the long table, Ector turned to Arthur and whispered something in his ear. He glanced smilingly at his son Kay, snoring loudly at his other side, then the old man got up from his chair. Arthur got to his feet and followed his foster father out of the hall.

I moved silently behind them, intent on protecting Arthur from any attempt on his life.

Ector led Arthur up a stairway and into what appeared to be his private quarters. It was a low-ceilinged room with a single window, closed with wooden shutters against the night winds. A large canopied bed stood to one side, mussed and unmade. Across the room was a trestle table and several chairs.

I stood in the doorway as Ector gestured Arthur to one of the chairs.

The old man glanced at me, then said, "Arthur, what I have to tell you is for your ears only."

"Orion is more than my squire, Father," replied Arthur. "I have no secrets from him."

Ector's white brows rose, but he shrugged and said to me, "Shut the door, then, and stand there."

"Yes, my lord," I said.

But no sooner had I shut it than I heard a scratching on the other side of the door. Not a knock. Scratching. Just as the ancient Egyptians and Trojans did.

Despite his years, Ector's hearing was still keen. "That would be Merlin. Let him in, squire."

Sure enough, it was Merlin, still in his star-flecked robe, although now he had a woolen skullcap pulled down over his ears. I smiled inwardly. Taking human form brings human frailties with it. Hades felt cold.

Arthur got to his feet, a tall broad-shouldered young man among two wizened elders.

"Tell him the news," Ector said to Merlin.

The wizard paced slowly across the room to join Arthur and his foster father, never so much as glancing at me.

"Ambrosius is dying," Merlin said. "He will not survive the winter."

Arthur bowed his head. "My uncle has been very good to me. It's sad to lose him."

"Sad for Britain," said Ector. "Without a High King, every petty king in the land will make war on his neighbors."

"They are already doing so. The curse of the Celts," Arthur murmured, "unable to stand together against the invaders."

"The land needs a High King," said Merlin. "One who can bring all the Britons together."

Arthur asked, "Yes, but who?"

"You."

Arthur gaped at the wizard. "Me? That's impossible! The other kings would never accept it. I'm hardly twenty, and a bastard, as well."

"About your age," said Merlin, "nothing can be done. But about the circumstances of your birth . . ." He turned to Ector.

"You know who my true father is?" Arthur blurted.

The old man nodded and reached a hand up to Arthur's shoulder. "My boy, your father was Uther Pendragon, he who was king over much of this land. He who kept the Saxons in check by making a truce with them. He who was betrayed by Vortigen and died fighting the truce-breaker."

Arthur sank down onto the wooden chair. "Uther Pendragon was my father?"

"Why else would I give you the red dragon as your emblem?" Ector asked kindly.

Merlin said, "Uther was your father and Igraine, his queen, your mother. But they were not yet married when you were conceived."

"So Uther asked me to raise you as my own son," Ector continued. "He promised to make your birth known and proclaim you as his son and heir once you had grown to manhood."

"But he died before he could do so. And your mother, also."

Arthur sat in stunned silence.

"You must return to Cadbury at once and claim your inheritance," said Ector.

"You must become the next High King," Merlin agreed.

I watched and listened in growing confusion. Which side is

Hades on? I asked myself. Aten wants Arthur killed. Now Hades is telling Arthur he should be High King? That's exactly the opposite of what Aten desires. Or is this another of their subtle plots? Arthur claims the kingship and he's assassinated by one of the others who wants the title. Is that their ploy?

"You are the only man in the realm who can bring the petty kingdoms together, Arthur," Ector was telling him. "Unless you make yourself High King, Britain will tear itself apart."

"And leave the pickings to the Saxons and the other barbarians," Merlin added.

Slowly, hesitantly, Arthur muttered, "I never thought . . . this is more than I . . . anyone . . ."

I could see the anguish in his eyes. It was one thing to be the High King's battle leader and thrash the invading barbarians up and down the land. But to be High King himself! The possibility had never entered Arthur's mind before this very moment.

"You must," said Merlin.

Ector smiled down at him. "You can do it, my lad. No one else in the entire land of Britain can."

Still Arthur sat, blinking in doubt, uncertainty.

Still standing by the door, I spoke out. "Why else do you think the Lady of the Lake gave you Excalibur, my lord?"

The two old men glared at me, but Arthur clasped the jeweled hilt of the sword at his side and slowly got to his feet.

"She knew?"

"She knows that you can be a great king," I said. "It is your destiny."

He stood straighter, squared his shoulders. "Then . . . I suppose it must be."

Ector clapped his hands in glee, and froze there, his wrinkled face smiling so widely I could see the rotted stumps of his teeth, like an uneven picket fence. Arthur stood immobilized, too, his hand on Excalibur's hilt, his face set in grim anticipation.

Merlin turned to me. "Congratulations, Orion. You've convinced him he should be High King."

"You're the one who convinced him," I said, knowing that neither Ector nor Arthur could see or hear anything.

"I told you I'd be neutral in this matter," Merlin said, in Hades' rich baritone voice. "I've set him on the road to Cadbury. Now his fate is in the lap of the gods." He laughed at his little joke.

"And the gods want him dead," I said.

"Most of them do. They agree with Aten. Only Anya and a few of the others want Arthur to succeed."

"As I do."

He laughed again, louder and more bitterly. "You? You're not even a mortal, Orion. You're a creature, one of Aten's constructions. What difference does your opinion make?"

"We'll see," I said.

"Yes, indeed we will."

With that, Merlin disappeared. He winked out of existence, as if he'd never been there.

Arthur and Ector stirred out of their stasis.

"Where's Merlin?" Arthur asked.

"Gone," I said.

"But how could he—"

Ector shrugged his frail shoulders. "He's a mighty wizard, Arthur. His comings and goings are pure magic."

I remembered from somewhere in another lifetime the words of a very wise man: Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.

The following morning, Arthur was in a sweat to get started for Cadbury. The sky was a cloudless bright blue, but the land lay under a thick blanket of snow. With a handful of his best knights and their squires, Arthur left Castle Wroxeter and headed south. Friar Samson accompanied us, wrapped in a thick black hooded robe, offering prayers and blessings as we left.

Ector insisted on coming along, despite the frailty of his years. "I'll go only as far as Castle Cameliard," he said, "to make certain that King Leodegrance makes you welcome."

Despite the numbing cold the weather was beautiful: The drifts of snow glittered beneath the crystal sky. Our horses floundered through the deep drifts as we rode slowly, painfully southward, and I wondered what awaited us at Castle Cameliard.

"You? You're not even a mortal, Orion. You're a creature, one of Aten's constructions. What difference does your opinion make?"

If Leodegrance styled himself a king, I thought, he must be a very meager one. Cameliard was a ramshackle set of thatch-roofed buildings set on a hilltop and surrounded by a palisade of lopsided, sagging staves, their tops once sharpened to points but now looking weathered, blunted, sadly neglected.

The castle's chamberlain recognized Sir Ector and invited us to spend the night. Our horses' hooves boomed on the warped planks of the sagging drawbridge that covered the moat, which was filled with reeking putrid garbage rather than water. The chamberlain saw us safely quartered in one wing of the main building, then ushered Arthur and Ector to an audience with the king.

Leodegrance sat on a throne of age-dulled oak. He was iron gray: his beard had obviously not felt a brush in weeks, his untrimmed hair fell lank and greasy below his shoulders, his face was square and blocky, his eyes the color of a steel blade. His tunic looked new and clean, however. He stared unblinkingly at Arthur as he and Ector approached the throne and made courteous bows. I remained at the doorway with Kay, who served as his father's squire this day.

Once Ector introduced Arthur and explained that he was going to Cadbury to claim his right to be High King, Leodegrance's face went even colder, crafty. Something was being calculated behind those iron gray eyes, I knew.

Throwing aside the usual diplomatic niceties, Ector asked bluntly if Leodegrance would support Arthur's claim.

To my surprise the king answered, "The son of Uther

Pendragon? Of course you have my support."

Before Arthur could utter a word of thanks, though, Leodegrance smiled slyly and added, "Under one condition."

Ector said, "A condition?"

"A High King requires a wife, so that he can have legitimate heirs who will carry on his line," said Leodegrance.

"True," Ector agreed. "But Arthur is scarcely twenty. There is plenty of time for him to find a wife."

Arthur had already sired a son, Modred, by the witch Morganna. She was raising him in her castle in Berenicia, beyond Hadrian's Wall, raising him to hate his father.

"No need to search any farther for your wife, young Arthur," Leodegrance said, smiling broadly now. "I have a daughter, Guinevere. You will meet her tonight at dinner."

Arthur looked as if someone had pole-axed him.

.....

Guinevere turned out to be a pretty and young, slim and sprightly as an elf, with long chestnut hair that tumbled down her back and sparkling brown eyes. All through dinner she chattered away nervously, sitting between Arthur and her father. Arthur picked at the slab of venison set before him; Guinevere ate heartily, tearing into the roast with both hands, talking every minute. From my seat across the room, crowded in with the other squires and the slavering shaggy hounds, I thought she seemed jumpy, almost frightened. And down at the end of the high table sat Friar Samson, his brows knitted into a scowl, hardly touching the meat set before him.

At the other end of the high table sat young Lancelot. His eyes never left Guinevere, not for a moment.

Is this the test that Anya warned me about? I asked myself. Arthur certainly looks uncomfortable, sitting next to her. Does Leodegrance plan to assassinate Arthur and claim the High Kingship for himself? Is Guinevere part of his plan?

I wished I could be up at the high table beside Arthur to taste his food and drink. My body absorbs most poisons and breaks them down into harmless ingredients. I have been bitten by venomous snakes without ill effect.

Despite my fears, Arthur got through the dinner with nothing more harmful than his discomfort at being placed beside the elfin Guinevere. At last the dinner ended. There was an awkward moment when the king pushed away the last bowl of apples and rose slowly and somewhat unsteadily to his feet. Everyone else stood, of course. Guinevere turned toward Arthur expectantly, but he simply stood beside her, his arms at his sides. After a few heartbeats she spun around and clutched at her father's arm. They walked off together, leaving Arthur standing there, looking befuddled.

Ector, Kay, and Friar Samson went with Arthur to the corner bedchamber that Leodegrance had given him. I went too, determined to stand outside his door all night to guard against any possible treachery.

"Well," Ector asked, beaming, "what do you think of her, my boy?"

"Guinevere?" Arthur asked.

"Who else?"

Kay sat on the bed, bouncing slightly to test it. "She's a pretty little thing," he said, with a grin, patting the bedcover suggestively.

Arthur said nothing. I remembered how Morganna had enchanted him. She was another of the Creators in human form; she called herself Aphrodite. I myself had felt the power of her allure. It was clear to me that Arthur was still under her spell, at least a little.

"She'll make a fine queen for you," Ector prompted. "You can be married here and bring her to Cadbury with you."

"No!" cried Friar Samson.

We all turned to him.

"This girl is a pagan," he said. "She follows the old gods. She's not even been baptized!"

"Half the people of Britain have not been baptized," Ector said, frowning. "More than half."

"The High King must have a Christian wife," Samson insisted. "The example must be set."

"I'm a Christian," said Arthur. "Isn't that enough?"

The friar looked shocked. "How could you even think of taking a pagan for your wife?"

Arthur stared down at his boots for a moment, then said in a low voice, "I

~ THE ~
OFFICIAL SOUNDTRACK HAS ARRIVED

The heroes of *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®* never shrink from any challenge, be it man, monster, or magic. From the depths of the Abyss to the cloud-covered tops of the Barrier Peaks, these lush orchestral arrangements provide the perfect soundtrack for any quest. Adventure beckons you with every note.... Will you heed its call?

~ COMPOSED BY ~
MIDNIGHT SYNDICATE

WWW.MIDNIGHTSYNDICATE.COM

*Dungeons & Dragons, the artwork, and the Wizards of the Coast Logo are registered trademarks of Wizards of the Coast, Inc., a subsidiary of Hasbro, Inc. All rights reserved. Used under authorization.

don't want her for my wife. I don't want to be married. Not now. Not yet."

Ector went to his side, took Arthur by the elbow, and guided him to the Roman-styled wooden chair in the corner of the room. Once Arthur was seated with Ector standing beside him, I realized that he and the old man were nearly eye-to-eye.

"Arthur, you have been like a true son to me."

"And you have been a good father to me," Arthur replied.

"Often I have given you advice. Has it ever been false or harmful?"

"No, never."

"Then heed me now, my boy. A king need not like his wife. Kings marry for political reasons, not for romance. A king can always find plenty of women to bed."

"That's sinful!" gasped Samson.

Ector ignored him. "You needn't like your queen. You only have to have a son by her."

Arthur looked torn, pained. "But my father—my actual father—he loved my mother, didn't he?"

Ector heaved a great sigh. "Ah, that was something else, my boy. Uther's passion for Igraine led him to go to war so he could possess her."

"Sin," hissed the friar. Arthur glared at him and he said no more.

"Marry Guinevere," Ector urged, "and you will gain Leodegrance's support. It would be foolish to make an enemy of him."

"Besides," Kay chimed in, still sitting on the bed, "she might be a lot of fun."

"But she's a pagan," Samson complained. "So is her father."

Ector was not deterred. "By marrying a pagan, Arthur, you show the people that you intend to be High King for everyone, not merely the Christians."

Samson looked horrified.

Quickly Ector added, "You can always baptize her after you're married. She'd have no choice but to obey you, then."

Arthur's head sank. "I've got to think about this," he muttered. "Please leave me now, all of you."

Reluctantly, Ector, Kay and the friar left; Samson the most loath of all to leave before winning Arthur to his point of view. I stood in the drafty hallway and watched them go to their bedchambers, then rested my back against the wooden wall and listened to the wind moaning outside, intent on staying on guard until daylight. The only light in the hallway came from a torch set into a sconce down by the stairway that led to Leodegrance's great hall. As the hours crept slowly by, it guttered and died, leaving me in darkness.

I need very little sleep, but I confess that I was drifting as I stood guard, my eyes heavy, my head sinking to my chest.

A sound snapped me to full attention. The creak of a floorboard; the padding of running feet. Someone was hurrying down the dark hallway, making no effort to be silent about it. I can see like a cat, and I quickly discerned the approaching figure of a man, sword unsheathed.

I pulled out my sword and the figure stopped abruptly.

"Who's there? Orion, is that you?" Lancelot's voice, high and tense with anxiety.

"What are you doing, prowling about at night?" I whispered.

"Guinevere!" he said urgently. "She's being abducted!"

"What?"

"I saw them, out in the courtyard. A band of hooded men, all in white. Six or more. They have her with them!"

Kidnapping Arthur's intended bride? Why? Who? A thousand questions raced through my mind. I wondered if I should leave Arthur asleep and unguarded. Perhaps this was a ruse to draw me away from his door.

"Stay here and guard Arthur," I said to Lancelot. "I'll go after them."

"No! One man can't fight them all."

"But—" It was too late. He was already running down the hallway toward the stairs that led down to the courtyard, shouting, "To arms! Rise! Awake! To arms!"

I had no choice but to follow him. He was right: one man could not face a half dozen armed enemies, not even Lancelot. Behind me I could hear grumbles and curses as Arthur's knights stumbled out of their beds.

Down the wooden stairs Lancelot raced and out into the numbing cold of the courtyard, with me two steps behind him. The stars were like hard gleaming diamonds in the freezing black sky. Lancelot had a cloak over his shoulders, but it flew open as he ran.

Lancelot hesitated a heartbeat, looked around, then pointed his sword toward the postern gate.

"That's the way they were taking her!"

"How did you come to see them?" I puffed as I hurried after him.

"I was up in the tower, keeping watch," he called back over his shoulder.

"We should wait for Arthur and the others."

"No time! God knows what they could do to her if we don't reach them quickly!"

My mind kept warning me that this could be a trap, but I couldn't imagine Lancelot betraying Arthur. The young knight worshiped Arthur, followed him like a puppy.

The postern gate was ajar. "They're in a hurry," I said as we ducked through it.

Beyond the snow-covered ground at the castle wall's base, a pair of logs had been lain across the refuse-filled ditch of the moat. They stood out dark and bare against the snow. Guinevere's captors had laid them there to speed their escape. Did they know Lancelot and I were pursuing them?

I could see no sign of horses in the dim starlight. They were on foot. There was a rough trail through the snow that led into the woods made by more than six pairs of boots, I saw.

Lancelot plunged into the woods as if he were chasing a single helpless foe. I pushed on after him as he followed the trail through the banks of snow. Up ahead, through the black boles of the trees, I saw a light. It flickered fitfully; not one of the Creators, I reasoned. It looked more like a bonfire.

Lancelot was plunging ahead, hell-bent to reach the kidnappers. I grabbed him by the shoulder and forced him to thump heavily down in the snow.

"Wait!" I whispered. "See how many we face before you go dashing in."

"They might harm her!" he whispered back. "Kill her!"

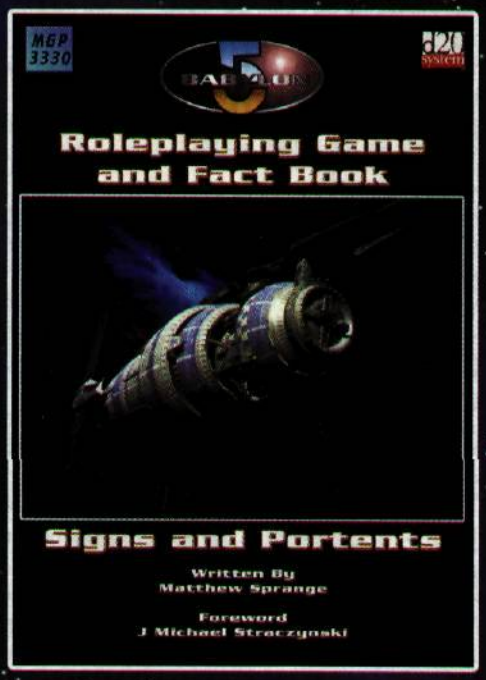
"Getting yourself killed won't help her," I said.

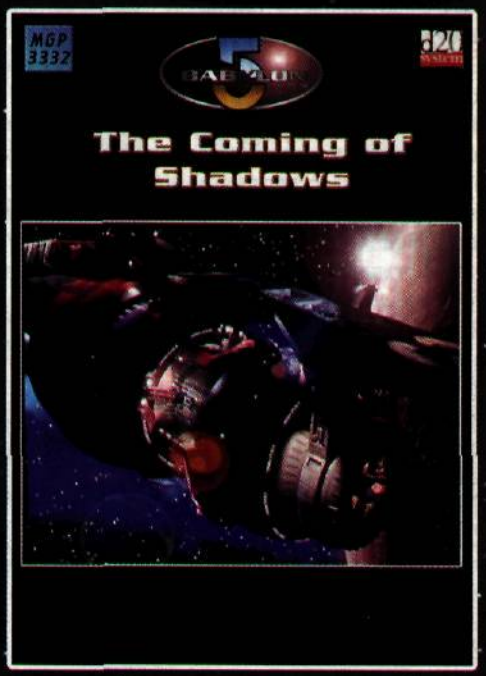
He shook free of my grip and crawled through the

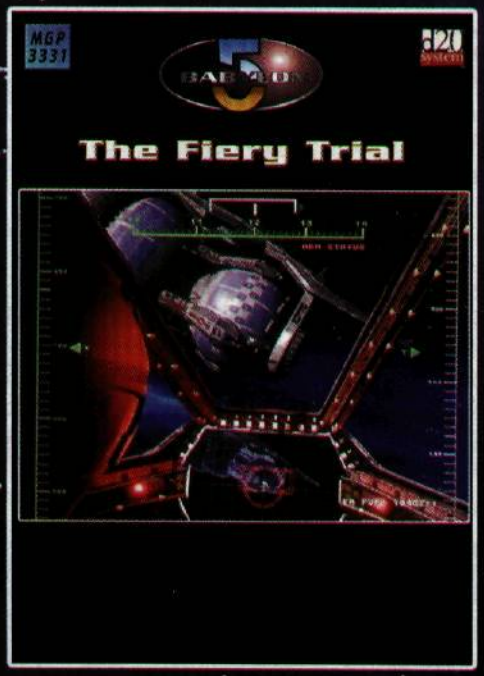
MONGOOSE PUBLISHING

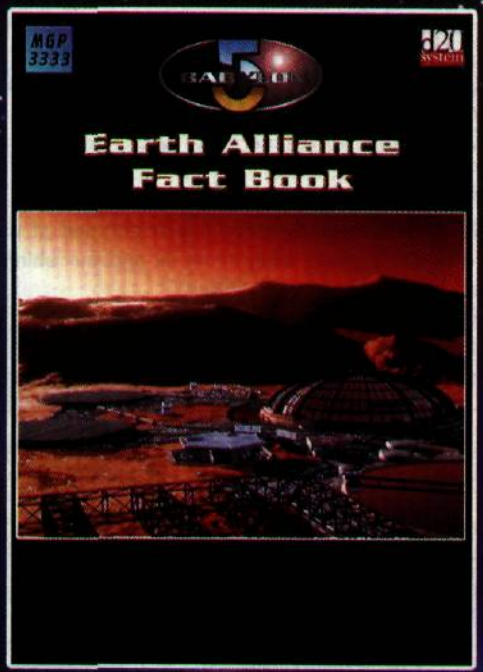
www.mongoosepublishing.com

The year 2259 and the worlds of the Earth Alliance beckon . . .









snow toward the firelight, his sword glinting in his right hand. I looked back along the trail we had come. No sign of any of the knights, neither could I hear anyone coming along after us.

Setting my teeth, I pushed through the snow drifts, following Lancelot. He had dropped to one knee, eying the scene before him like a lion sizing up its prey.

In a small clearing, a dozen white-robed figures were standing hand-in-hand, forming a ring around a blazing bonfire taller than a full-grown man. Guinevere was standing with them, wearing nothing but a gossamer shift, her chestnut hair tumbling down below her waist, holding hands with the men on her right and left.

"Druids!" Lancelot whispered.

"They've been outlawed since the Romans ruled Britain," I said.

"But now they've returned to their ancient rites."

Human sacrifice was part of their ancient rites, I knew.

Lancelot tensed to spring into their midst. The druids did not seem to be carrying arms of any kind, yet who knew what lay hidden beneath the folds of their robes?

Again I grasped Lancelot's shoulder, holding him down. He tried to wrench free, but I whispered into his ear, "They don't seem to be harming her."

As I spoke, they began to dance. Somewhere out of the darkness came the eerie wail of a wooden flute, and the druids—with Guinevere among them—began a stately, slow dance circling around the crackling, sparking fire.

Lancelot said nothing. His eyes were following Guinevere as she allowed Arthur to lead her back to the castle . . .

I stood up and Lancelot rose beside me. Together we walked out of the shadows of the trees, into the clearing, toward Guinevere. The druids stopped, froze into immobility. I could see the shock on their long-bearded faces as the two of us advanced on them with drawn swords.

"Stop!" Guinevere commanded, holding out both hands to us.

"We've come to rescue you," said Lancelot.

"Rescue me? These are my friends."

"Friends? Bloody druids?"

The druids seemed thoroughly frightened of us. They were slowly backing away from us and our shining sharp-edged blades.

"We thought they were abducting you," I said.

Slight as a sparrow, Guinevere stepped toward me, no trace of fear in her demeanor. "They are helping me to escape."

"Escape?" Lancelot asked. "From what?"

"From Arthur. From marriage. He doesn't want me for a bride, and I don't want to be married to anyone. Especially not to him!"

Lancelot looked as if she had clouted him between the eyes with a quarterstaff.

Through the dark woods I heard the shouts of angry men. Arthur's knights were approaching, probably with Arthur at their lead.

The Druids heard them too. Without word among them, they bolted in the opposite direction and disappeared into the trees.

"So much for your friends," I said to Guinevere.

Her brown eyes snapped angrily at me. "What can they expect at the hands of Friar Samson and his like? Your holy man would burn my friends at the stake."

Yes, I thought, and sow the seeds of bitter enmity between Arthur and the pagans still living in Britain. A civil war of the most brutal kind would be the result.

At that moment, Bors and Kay burst into the clearing, swords in their hands. Leodegrance and Arthur were right behind him, the king of Cameliard looking more than a little ridiculous in his night shift, with a shield on one arm and a heavy battle-mace in the other. Arthur had thrown on his chain mail. Excalibur gleamed in the firelight.

"It's all right, sire," I said, thinking as fast as I could. "A band of cutthroats abducted the princess, but Lancelot drove them off single-handedly."

Lancelot's jaw fell open at that, but he said nothing.

"They intended to hold Guinevere for ransom, sire," I went on, "knowing that she is to be your bride."

Arthur looked me in the eye, then nodded as if he knew what was going on. Sheathing his sword, he turned away from me and grasped Lancelot by both shoulders.

"Thank you," he said. "You have saved the honor of my bride-to-be."

Lancelot stammered, "It . . . I was glad to do it, sire."

For an awkward moment we all stood there next to the roaring bonfire, feeling slightly foolish. Then Arthur said, "Back to the castle, everyone."

Lancelot took off his cloak and draped it around Guinevere's slight shoulders. She smiled at him, then stepped to Arthur's side and allowed him to take her hand.

As the others started back toward the castle, Lancelot stood there in the clearing, looking downcast.

I said to him, low enough so that only he could hear it, "Arthur owes you a great debt, although he'll never know of it. You may have saved the kingdom this night."

Lancelot said nothing. His eyes were following Guinevere as she allowed Arthur to lead her back to the castle, back to her wedding. She glanced back at Lancelot and smiled sadly.

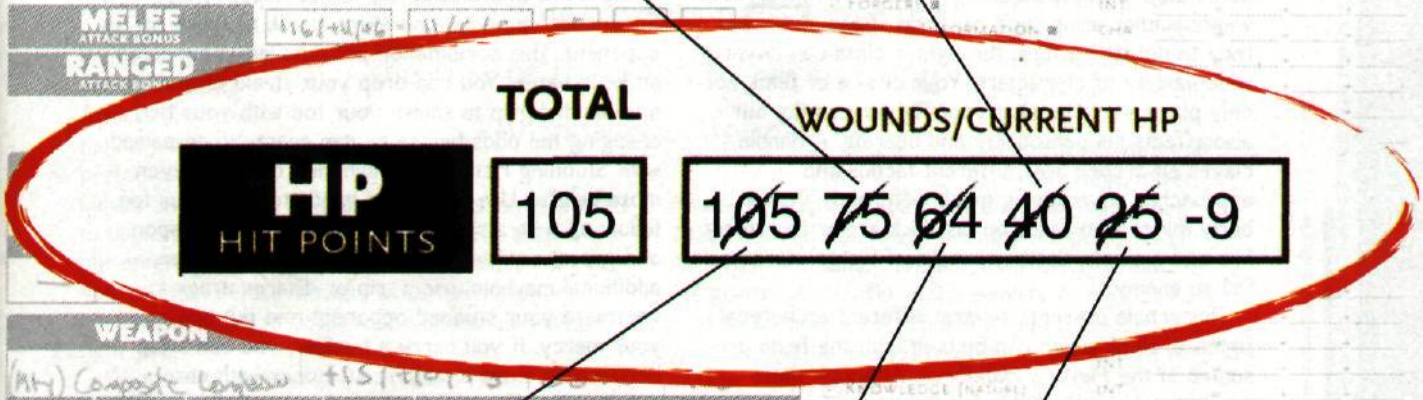
In my mind, I heard Anya whisper, "*You* saved Arthur's realm from bloody civil war, Orion. Well done."

Before I could bask in the glow of her approval, Aten's smug voice intruded into my thoughts. "Very well done, indeed, Arthur. The seeds of Arthur's destruction took root tonight."

And he laughed his sneering, hateful laugh in the cold, dark winter night.

SUBSCRIBE TO DRAGON MAGAZINE!

Your character's life depends on it!



LASH OF TORMENT
ISSUE #298

BLADED CHARIOT
ISSUE #294

GHOST-FACED KILLER
ISSUE #289

WEB GOLEM
ISSUE #302

SONIC WAVE
ISSUE #304

12 ISSUE SUBSCRIPTION

ONLY $37.95

Canada: $43.95 CAN Foreign: $80.00 US

SAVE $33.00 OFF THE COVER PRICE!

ORDER ONLINE NOW!

www.paizo.com/dragon

Call: 1-425-289-0060 • Email: customer.service@paizo.com

paizo PUBLISHING

The Play's the Thing

COMBAT EXPERTISE
FIGHTER FEAT COMBOS

by Michael Mearls

Of all the basic character classes, fighters are perhaps the most flexible. From a gallant knight clad in full plate armor who rides into battle atop a fearsome charger to a wily fencer who wears leather armor and relies on speed and accuracy to defeat his foes, the fighter class can cover a wide variety of characters. Your choice of feats not only plays a role in what your fighter can do, but also affects his personality and bearing. A nimble, clever elf archer uses different tactics and approaches adventuring much differently than a burly dwarf who relies on his thick armor to protect him and a single, decisive stroke of his greataxe to fell an enemy.

This article presents several different archetypal fighters, all of which can be built with the feats presented in the *Player's Handbook*. Although these combos are most suitable for fighters, who gain feats in quick succession, other classes can use them as well.

THE BACK ALLEY BRAWLER

Raised in a tough environment and forced to use every advantage she could find, the back alley brawler is a dirty fighter who employs a variety of tricks to overwhelm her foes. Notions of honor, chivalry, or fair play are utterly alien to her. This isn't to say that the brawler is a mean-spirited bully. As a hero, she protects the weak and uses her strength to overcome those she sees as evil. Once swords are drawn, however, the rule of the streets is all that applies: Conquer or be conquered. The brawler can be almost coldhearted in her drive to win. She thinks nothing of using lies, treachery, and ambushes to defeat her enemies. To the brawler, the end always justifies the means.

Improved Initiative + Quick Draw: This combination of feats allows you to catch your enemies by surprise, luring them into dropping their guard before you slip a knife between their ribs. Before your enemies can react, you have a weapon prepared and are ready to strike. With Improved Initiative, you can press this advantage before your enemies can recover.

Improved Unarmed Strike + Two-Weapon Fighting: Sometimes you need one extra attack to finish off an opponent. This combination provides an unexpected strike in battle. You can drop your shield or shift to a one-handed grip to smash your foe with your fist, changing the odds before he can react. When paired with Stunning Fist, this combination becomes even more helpful. Use your bare hands to stun your foe, follow up with a strike using your primary weapon, and repeat until your enemies are defeated. For additional mayhem, use a trip or disarm attack to neutralize your stunned opponent and put him at your mercy. If you carry a buckler, you can swap between an extra attack or AC bonus with ease.

Improved Unarmed Strike + Combat Reflexes: This is the ultimate combination for barroom brawls. If your Dexterity is high enough, this combination of feats can grant you a free attack against every unarmed opponent who attacks you during a round. Combine these feats with Improved Disarm, Weapon Focus (unarmed attack), and Weapon Specialization (unarmed attack) to strip away a foe's weapon and follow up with a half-dozen jabs to his face if he tries to stand and fight.

THE CLEVER STRATEGIST

Popular stereotype holds that fighters and barbarians move to the back of the party when heavy thinking is needed to solve a problem. With his high Dexterity and Intelligence, the clever strategist is an exception to this belief. He knows that a single dagger strike at just the right moment can prove far deadlier than a hundred sword strokes made at the wrong time. The strategist uses tactics and planning to put his enemies at a disadvantage. Once he has them where he wants them, he can wade into battle knowing that he has already won. The clever strategist might be a brilliant mercenary captain, a swordmaster who

Borders illustrated by David Wahlstrom

wields his weapon with a monk's focus and discipline, or a scrawny but fast warrior who frustrates his enemies despite their superior might and deadlier weapons. These characters plot and plan their enemies' downfalls, scorning direct confrontation and engaging in Machiavellian schemes that would draw a rogue's envy.

Combat Expertise + Improved Disarm: Combat Expertise allows you to tailor your AC as needed, while Improved Disarm can transform a daunting opponent into a helpless target. Combat Expertise is a useful feat to employ when you are fighting against big, powerful monsters that have low ACs and high damage potentials. These creatures suffer size penalties to their attacks and ACs, so using Combat Expertise has minimal effect on your ability to hit them while allowing you to avoid their powerful attacks. Improved Disarm is useful against humanoids such as orcs and hobgoblins. Without their weapons, these monsters are virtually helpless.

Exotic Weapon Proficiency (spiked chain) + Spring Attack: This combination provides the perfect way to harass an opponent who lacks reach. Use these feats to dart in, strike an opponent, then move back without entering her threatened area. With this combination you can deliver attacks while forcing your enemies to move through your threatened area to fight you.

Exotic Weapon Proficiency (spiked chain) + Combat Reflexes: With its 10-foot reach, the spiked chain is a perfect partner for Combat Reflexes. With this combination, you gain free attacks against monsters without reach that charge you, while those with reach lose that advantage. You can also use your attacks of opportunity against spellcasters, archers, and other enemies. Simply move into range of your enemies and rain attacks of opportunity down upon them when they try to use ranged weapons and spells.

Exotic Weapon Proficiency (spiked chain) + Combat Reflexes + Improved Disarm or Improved Trip: For additional mayhem, pair your spiked chain and Combat Reflexes combination with Improved Trip or Improved Disarm. When making attacks of opportunity, use disarm and trip attacks to neutralize your enemies. An orc barbarian can't make a charge attack if you dump her flat on her face before she reaches you. Stand at the front of your party and casually flick away opponents' weapons with Improved Disarm as they draw your attacks of opportunity, leaving them virtually helpless or forcing them to waste actions drawing weapons or picking up their equipment.

THE OVERWHELMING FORCE

The perfect combo for a fighter who prefers raw might and power over trickery and agility, the overwhelming force bases all of her options on her Strength. This fighter would rather land one wild, devastating swing than a multitude of smaller cuts. Big, spectacular strikes are this warrior's calling card, and as such, she has a high Strength score. Her tactics, which usually don't go beyond "smash the monster until it drops," might seem simplistic to some, but with her skill in battle, that's all the tactical thinking she needs.

Power Attack + Cleave: The basic building block of the overwhelming force, Power Attack combines well with a high Strength. You can afford to reduce your base attack in order to gain additional damage, since you have a decent enough bonus to compensate for the loss because of your high Strength. In turn, boosting the amount of damage you do helps you when you use the Cleave feat, since the harder you hit, the more likely you are to activate that feat. Using Power Attack is a gamble. You chance missing with your attack but can potentially land a very powerful blow. As a rule of thumb, save this feat for big creatures like giants, who suffer a size penalty to AC but have a lot of hit points, or opponents that have lots of spells or special abilities but few hit points, like wizards or mind flayers.

> Once he's eating dirt, the +4 bonus to hit prone targets takes care of the rest of the penalty for fighting with two weapons.

Two-Weapon Fighting + Flail: Most players assume that Two-Weapon Fighting is the province of rangers and fighters with a high Dexterity, but a big bruiser can make excellent use of this feat. Consider wielding a flail in your off-hand to make trip attacks. Your high Strength compensates for the penalties associated with two-weapon fighting. In addition, a trip attempt requires a melee touch attack, and most large, powerful creatures have poor touch ACs. Once he's eating dirt, the +4 bonus to hit prone targets takes care of the rest of the penalty for fighting with two weapons. On the next round, you can either trip your opponent again or, if he remains prone, drop the flail, wield your primary weapon in two hands to increase your damage bonus, and even use Power Attack to deliver a savage blow.

THE SNIPING ARCHER

Not all fighters like to get up close and personal with their opponents. The sniping archer, for example, prefers to remain at the edge of a fight, using his bow or thrown weapons to whittle down his opponents. He relies on speed and maneuverability to keep his opponents at long range, peppering them

with arrows and defeating them before they can reach him. Sniping Archers prefer plans and actions that keep them safe from trouble. Although often mistaken as cowards, they are far from cowardly. Rather, these fighters are cautious and prefer to calculate their risks. In combat, the sniping archer is most comfortable when he has numerous options available to him. He approaches other problems the same way, seeking to avoid committing himself to a single, unalterable course of action. The sniping archer values freedom and independence above all else, and just as he avoids becoming cornered in combat, so too does he avoid unnecessary entanglements and burdens in his personal life.

Point Blank Shot + Weapon Focus + Rapid Shot: These three feats serve as the basis for most long-ranged combat abilities. Effective archers make these feats their first choices. In dungeon, forest, and urban environments, Point Blank Shot comes into play in almost every battle. The additional point of damage it grants you is important at low levels when you cannot afford a mighty bow. Weapon Focus and Rapid Shot form a nice synergy, giving you a mere -1 total penalty to make an additional attack. This bonus shot is a good way to increase your damage potential, especially if you use a ranged weapon that gains no bonus damage due to your Strength modifier.

Two-Weapon Fighting + Rapid Shot + Quick Draw: This combination of feats turns thrown weapons into a good option for ranged fighters. Normally, you cannot make more than one attack per round with thrown weapons since they must be drawn as a move action. Quick Draw allows you to make a full attack, while Rapid Shot and Two-Weapon Fighting combine to give you two additional attacks without sacrificing too much accuracy.

Dodge + Mobility: While most archers use these two feats as a stepping stone to Shot on the Run, they also form a useful combination on their own, allowing you to move away from your opponents and find a secure place to rain arrows down upon the enemy. Combine these feats with the Tumble skill, and you can ensure that you are never cornered again.

THE VALIANT HORSEMAN

Riding atop a powerful charger, clad in heavy armor, and bearing a sword and lance, the valiant horseman fearlessly charges the enemy, skewering them upon her lance and grinding them beneath her mount's iron shod hooves. This combo produces a fighter who is a lethal combination of speed and power. With a single charge, she can send an ogre, troll, or giant into flight. Her great speed allows her to chase down the nimblest opponent, while her strength allows her to carry heavy weapons and armor without slowing down. The valiant horseman is confident in all things. She prefers a bold, devastating charge and flings herself at the enemy, risking life and limb for a single powerful strike. She does not, however, simply stand in place and trade blows with her enemy after the initial contact. Instead she stays on the perimeter, circling back for another strike or seeking out the perfect moment to bring her lance to bear. After all, one misstep can send her tumbling from her mount and leave her surrounded by her enemies. The valiant horseman attacks all problems in her life with this same relentless confidence, well aware that a moment's hesitation can spell the difference between victory and defeat.

The valiant horseman is confident in all things. She prefers a bold, devastating charge and flings herself at an enemy . . .

Ride-By Attack + Trample: Both of these feats enable you or your mount to move past an opponent and make an attack, allowing you to take maximum advantage of your maneuverability. When used together, however, these two feats can also deal tremendous damage to a single target of your choice. At higher levels, Ride-By Attack limits your effectiveness because it allows you only one attack per round. By combining the feat with Trample, you can overcome this penalty by dealing extra damage to your target.

Dodge + Mobility + Ride-By Attack: One of the problems with feats like Ride-By Attack and Spirited Charge is that they can expose you to attacks of opportunity from your opponent's allies. Mobility allows you to charge past lesser monsters to target an important foe without suffering too many attacks. Remember that most feats work the same whether you're in the saddle or on foot. Obviously, Spring Attack and Run are useless while mounted, but Mobility and other feats are often overlooked when building characters that ride into battle.

Get Them While They Last
DRAGON Back Issues

Offer good only while supplies last.

www.paizo.com/backissues

286 Shannara
Terry Brooks's novels come to life in your campaign with everything you need to play in Shannara: the gazetteer, the elder druid prestige class, six monsters, six artifacts, 19 NPCs, and a map of the world of Shannara.

287 The Planes
Variant dream planes, prestige classes from Planescape, new psionic feats, and five new monsters. Here's your second chance to get the first part of the giant FORGOTTEN REALMS map!

288 Fear
Death gods, monster combos, exotic graveyards, new tools to slay vampires, and the secret to getting through any mystery adventure. Issue #289 also has the second section of the giant FORGOTTEN REALMS map!

289 Oriental Adventures
Ninja prestige classes, kung-fu class combos, a Godzilla-size monster template, leveled magic items, and a martial arts move name generator. Part three of the giant FORGOTTEN REALMS map.

290 Scoundrels
The exotic Red Sails campaign setting shares an issue with a look at social adventures. Also, the death knight template, throwing D&D parties, and the final part of the giant FORGOTTEN REALMS map!

291 Gnomes
Get the official underwater combat rules! The secret life of gnomes, new gnome subraces, D&D sports, illusion spell design guide, eight new spells, the giant killer prestige class, and the lords of the death knights.

292 Wilderness
Fourteen new monsters, nine savage spells, four feral prestige classes, four new PC races, barbarian class combos, ancient Tokyo, new plant monsters, and great advice articles make this issue packed with material!

293 World Building
Run Emmy-winning games, check out functional domain rules for D&D, and get a new take on campaign religions. This issue isn't just for DMs, get ECLs for more than 300 monsters and other player-oriented features.

294 Deities & Demigods
Character catchphrases, new magic items, and stats for four Greyhawk gods. Plus, Complete official rules for DUNGEONS & DRAGONS vehicles; all you need to know to crash a chariot into a vampiric purple worm.

295 Castles
Castle history, ideas, and more. Build traps, evil towns, and characters who kill without weapons. Lay siege to your campaign with new roleplaying tips and everything you need to know about castles in D&D.

296 Dragon Hunters
The 26th anniversary issue features 12 deadly wurms, dragon hunter prestige classes, horrid monster cultists, the secrets of dragon senses, and the definitive guide to designing secret societies for D&D.

297 Epic Adventure
Real-world artifacts, eight new plane-touched races, two secret societies, a ready-to-use battle map, and other compelling features give characters of any level ideas and useful game options. Plus new fiction!

299 Knights & Paladins
Grab new rules for jousting and honor, and take a look at the first of the innovative Campaign Components series. Prepare for battle with 18 new paladin spells, and battle the horrors of Cormyr.

300 Vile Darkness
Easily the most controversial issue of *DRAGON* ever. If you missed the fiendish dragons, the special history of *DRAGON* article, or the much-talked about sealed section of mature content, now's your chance.

301 Swashbucklers
Duel to the death with new swashbuckling rules, compose masterwork performances, and discover alchemical secrets of the wilderness. Make sure you don't miss this highly praised issue of *DRAGON*.

302 Magic
Master arcane magic with advanced summoning rules, new spells, magical side effects, powerful constructs, and the lure of the tainted. Plus, customize your magic and tune up encounters in your game.

303 Gladiators
Keep your game exciting with an Underdark survival guide, 15 fighting styles, Campaign Components: Gladiators, a miniature-scale arena map, rules for fame and crowd favorites, and new rules for social skills.

304 Mercenaries
Keep up with the new mounted combat rules, don't miss 46 new spells, and check out *DRAGON*'s first open game content. You'll also get extraplanar mercenaries and cone spell area templates.

305 Urban Adventures
Urban character archetypes, a city on the Astral Plane, the secrets of the Yuan-ti, magic mirrors, and a city battlemat. Plus, George R. R. Martin graces *DRAGON* with an excerpt from the upcoming novel, *A Feast for Crows*.

d20 Special
Learn the basics of the d20 system, battle the beasts of the *Wheel of Time*, or challenge your players with skeletal mounts. Check out Dragonstar, and get expanded rules for D&D-compatible firearms.

PRICE Only the issues listed here are available.

$15
__70 __73 __75 __76 __77 __78 __79 __80 __81 __82 __83 __84 __87 __89 __90 __91 __93 __94 __95 __96 __99
__102 __103 __105 __107 __108 __109 __110 __119 __120 __121 __124 __126 __128 __129 __130 __131 __132 __133 __135 __138 __139
__140 __141 __143 __145 __147 __149 __151 __152 __153 __154 __156 __157 __158 __160 __163 __164 __165 __166 __167 __168 __169
__170 __171 __172 __173 __174 __175 __176 __177 __178 __179 __181 __182 __183 __184 __185 __186 __187 __188 __190 __191 __192
__194 __195 __196 __197 __198 __199 __Snarf Quest Compilation

$10
__201 __202 __203 __205 __207 __208 __209 __210 __211 __212 __213 __214 __215 __216 __217 __218 __219 __221 __223 __225 __226
__227 __228 __229 __232 __233 __235 __236 __237 __238 __239 __240 __241 __242 __243 __244 __245 __246 __247 __248 __249 __250
__251 __254 __255 __258 __260 __261 __263 __264 __265 __266 __268 __270 __271 __272 __273
__Best of Dragon 5 __Best of Dragon 2 __Best of Dragon 1

$6
__286 __287 __288 __289 __290 __291 __292 __293 __294 __295 __296 __297 __299 __300 __301 __302 __303 __304 __305 __306 __307
__D20 Special

To Order DRAGON back issues: call 425-289-0060 between 9:00AM and 5:00PM PST or Email backissues@paizopublishing.com

Or complete the form below and send it with a check or money order for the exact amount in US funds to: Paizo Publishing™ • 3245 146th PL. SE., Suite 110 • Bellevue, WA 98007

Name: _____

Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email: _____

Issue(s) you'd like to order*: _____

Alternate issue(s), in order of preference: _____

SHIPPING AND HANDLING FEES FOR BACK ISSUE ORDERS

Number of Issues	US	CANADA	ALL OTHER COUNTRIES
1 - 4	$2	$7	$9
5 - 8	$3	$14	$18
9 - 12	$4	$21	$27
13 - 17	$5	$28	$36
18 - 22	$6	$35	$45

EMAIL FOR FASTER SERVICE

*In the event that issues you order are not available, your order will be fulfilled based on the alternate issues you give. Choose an alternate issue for every issue you wish to purchase, and list the alternates in your order of preference.

DM's Toolbox

HIRELINGS AND FOLLOWERS
NPCS YOU SHOULD USE

by Johnn Four

In many groups, hirelings and followers are oft-neglected but important pieces of the campaign puzzle. After a hard day in the dungeons, heroes deserve a little rest, yet so much still needs to be done: mending armor, oiling weapons, cleaning orc crud from boot treads, and balancing the party's treasure books. How's an adventurer ever supposed to find enough time in the day to get everything done? The answer is simple: Hire someone to take care of these menial tasks for you!

Followers and hirelings can be huge boons to the game. For players, they can free up more adventuring time by managing the less exciting aspects of the PCs' lives, serve as tools and pawns, and add depth and power to the characters. On the other side of the screen, these NPCs can help the DM create memorable stories and rewarding campaigns, save on planning time, and increase storytelling options.

Many groups tend to avoid this category of NPCs. Players fear getting less DM attention and playing in slower games. DMs worry about extra design and maintenance loads and having more game elements to manage during sessions. Presented below is a simple process any group can use to ease hirelings and followers into a campaign without upsetting game flow or balance.

ADVANTAGES OF USING FOLLOWERS AND HIRELINGS

Being a DM can be time consuming. Unlike the players, the DM must spend time outside of game sessions preparing the campaign, organizing NPCs, creating and writing adventures, thinking up new storylines, keeping up with official rules changes and new options, and so on. With all they already have to do and keep track of, it is no wonder that many DMs are hesitant to add ongoing NPCs to their games. Still, followers and hirelings have some wonderful benefits, and there are ways to lessen the burden of managing them. Below are just some of the advantages of using these NPCs in your game.

They can help you create memorable stories and rewarding campaigns. In urban and rural areas, campaigns take on lives of their own if the PCs are familiar with the area's residents. Realism and immersion improve when the characters can call upon NPCs whose names, jobs, and personalities are already known. Allowing the group to employ hirelings and attract followers increases the number of relationships the characters have within the campaign in a natural, unforced manner. In addition, players might be inclined to roleplay more once they get to know various NPCs through patronage of their services.

Followers and hirelings can also provide you with more storytelling options. They can act as plot hooks when desired, as they'll know others who require assistance, are in danger, or have special quests to perform. Hirelings provide an easy mechanism to spawn side-plots that do not overshadow your main story line, and they are a good source for PCs to turn to when they are stuck and need advice or clues.

They can add an economy to your campaign. It's challenging finding ways to dispose of the party's loot as the characters advance in experience. Encouraging the use of hired services and provisioning NPC followers adds a new dimension to a campaign's economy that has long-term, beneficial consequences. On the surface, hiring and taking care of NPCs might seem like an inexpensive task—just a few gold pieces for trail rations or services rendered. However, you can add additional costs and expenses as the campaign progresses to help the PCs part with some of their hard-earned loot. Here are some ideas.

1. **Character pride.** Do followers and hirelings reflect the party's image? PCs should be encouraged to dress and accessorize their NPCs to maintain the group's standards.

2. **Hazard pay.** It's one thing to mend garments or translate archaic text within the safety of a city, but having to accompany a group of heavily armed people through dangerous locales requires a bonus.

Borders illustrated by David Wahlstrom

3. **Pay raise.** After a few months of traveling with a party, it would not be unreasonable for an NPC to request a pay raise. If the NPC services the characters from a civilized location, his rates will increase as business improves.

4. **Up sell.** NPCs often have more talents than just the ones they were hired to use. If they see new opportunities to make themselves valuable to the PCs, they should speak up and ask for appropriate compensation.

5. **Survival.** The party will want to keep favored, valuable, and trustworthy NPCs alive and successful. For those who travel with the party, they'll need better armor, potions, and other equipment to keep up with PCs. For sedentary hirelings and followers, they might need investments, loans, or endowments to remain in business or settled in a certain area so they can continue servicing the group.

They can save you valuable planning time. The more you roleplay an NPC, the better you portray her personality, abilities, and actions. If every person the characters meet is new, you're constantly struggling to create new game material and to run it well during sessions. Hirelings and followers offer great opportunities to reuse existing game information in a seamless way. This translates into better DMing and fewer planning tasks. It also lets you run new NPCs with reduced notes because there are other well-developed non-player characters around as back up.

> The more you roleplay an NPC, the better you portray her personality, abilities, and actions.

They can help you gently guide the PCs, keeping them on track. With hirelings and followers in the area, you have an ongoing, in-character voice in the player characters' lives. This is important for guiding the party in subtle ways without taking away player freedom. Roleplaying in-character lets you guide play in a way that naturally fits the flow of the campaign. Also, if the party never establishes roots and tends to wander randomly, establishing relationships with reliable hirelings and followers who offer local area perks can often solve this problem.

EXAMPLES OF USEFUL HIRELINGS AND FOLLOWERS

Many adventuring parties use hirelings and followers as packhorses and pincushions. This leaves much of their potential untapped. The following is a list of possible roles for your hirelings and followers. *The Arms and Equipment Guide* provide a more extensive list along with suggested daily wages.

1. An investor, banker, or accountant who protects and handles party wealth that isn't carried by the PCs, and perhaps even generates some investment revenue.

2. The quartermaster who ensures the PCs' rations, components, missiles, and other inventories are always full in exchange for a low monthly maintenance fee. This ensures that the PCs are ready for adventure at a moment's notice.

3. A private investigator who chases down minor leads, prevents the party from splitting up, and gathers facts for the PCs without using up valuable game time.

4. A sergeant or "leader" who manages the other NPCs, saving the adventuring party a lot of headaches.

5. A healer and/or herbalist for a party low on healing spells.

6. A camp guard and/or servant who handles a number of menial tasks for the party. The PCs can hire NPCs with keen sight and hearing to watch over their camp at night, allowing the PCs to rest and heal. Servants can maintain equipment, provide meals, and handle and care for mounts.

7. A spellcaster who takes the role of investigator, providing the party with divination spells, freeing up party spellcaster spell slots.

8. A local villager who acts as the party's seamstress. The PCs simply drop off fine materials and return to pick up well-crafted clothes for upcoming social engagements, roleplaying encounters, or impeccable adventuring.

9. A mapmaker who handles accurate mapping for the party so the game doesn't get bogged down.

10. An innkeeper who gathers rumors, leads, gossip, and clues for the PCs.

11. A blacksmith who repairs items for the PCs or provides them with new goods as needed, offering them a "loyal customer" discount for their repeat business.

12. A bodyguard who watches over the spellcasters in the adventuring party, allowing them to concentrate and cast spells uninterrupted.

13. NPCs who have valuable item creation feats, allowing the PCs to free up feat slots.

14. Messengers who deliver important information so the PCs don't need to leave the adventure site. These NPCs can also coordinate communication between PCs when the party is split into more than one group.

15. A charismatic spokesperson who handles minor roleplaying scenes for a mostly melee- or action-oriented group.

VARYING YOUR HIRELINGS

Avoid making hirelings and followers similar each time they appear in your campaign. To fully reap the benefits mentioned in this article, try to make these NPCs distinct, with each having her own niche or roll to fill. While there are several ways to make NPCs distinct, there are two categories that most hirelings and followers fall into: task-relevant and location-relevant NPCs.

First, consider whether the NPC is single-task or multitask oriented. Single-task NPCs perform one service at a time for the party, whether it's transporting goods, crafting equipment, or scouting ahead. When the service is complete, the NPC and the group part ways until that service is again required or the NPC is assigned a new task.

Multitask NPCs open up an interesting range of options for DMs. Used occasionally, these NPCs can help keep things interesting. For multitasking NPCs, think "programmable." The players assign their hireling a series of tasks and possible reactions to any foreseen challenges. For example, the tasks and responsibilities of the party's Chief of Mining Operations is to keep the PCs' mine running smoothly, hire spellcasters to detect evil and magic every 100 yards, purchase new equipment as needed, and find buyers at the market each time 50 silver bars are produced while the PCs are away.

Programmable NPCs can handle planning, maintenance, and administration efficiently without sacrificing realism or success. In the past, a DM might have been loathe to allow her player characters to own and run a mine. However, employing a Chief of Mining Operations gives the PCs the benefits they want (revenue, satisfaction of ownership, coolness factor) and lets the DM run adventures without slowing things down for mine maintenance and other issues. In fact, the presence of a PC-owned business, such as the mining operation example, can open up more plot and roleplaying opportunities.

Some NPCs will have a fixed location, such as a storefront or base of operations, while others will accompany the party or travel to various locales on business. Spice things up by changing the usual locations in which NPCs are found. Introduce a gnome tinkerer who loyally serves the rogue PC out of respect, but stays behind in his workshop to create ingenious new pieces of equipment for the rogue's upcoming adventures. Have the party's banker pack her bags (and a pair of burly bodyguards and six porters) to accompany the group because she heard that during their last dungeon exploration, the PCs left behind thousands of copper pieces.

Next time you're creating a hireling or follower, think about whether the NPC is suitable for a single task or whether they can be programmed and given quests, missions, or a series of complex tasks. Also determine whether they are stationery and serve from a community or special location, or whether they are mobile and either accompany the party or go on quests of their own.

5 REASONS WHY A HIRELING OR FOLLOWER WILL WORK FOR FREE

1. **Hero worship.** The NPC is enamored with one or all of the PCs.
2. **Impoverished.** The NPC is poor and will work for food or money.
3. **Experience.** The NPC seeks training.
4. **Fate.** The NPC feels that the PCs are special and worth establishing a relationship with.
5. **Relative.** The NPC is related to a PC and has dreams of becoming a full-fledged adventurer.

CONVINCING THE PLAYERS

Players might have a number of objections to using hirelings or followers based on past experiences or false assumptions. If they are adamantly opposed to using minor NPCs, don't force them. One option for convincing players is to have a frank discussion with them and address their concerns and objections. Sometimes though, words don't suffice, and it's easier to just show the players in-game. The four-step process outlined below allows Dungeon Masters to ease hirelings and followers into their games without upsetting the players or game balance.

Step 1: The Irresistible Offer

Your first goal is to establish a beachhead. Get the party to allow one hireling or follower into the campaign and see for themselves that these kinds of NPCs are beneficial. Do this by creating an easy, "free trial" that the PCs can't say no to, perhaps in the form of a friendly servant who maintains the campsite or a private investigator who idolizes the PCs and generates clues for them. The purpose of this step is to get the PCs to agree to use a hireling or follower and to let that experiment succeed.

Step 1 Tips

1. Give the NPC an interesting, trustworthy, non-abrasive personality.
2. The NPC should approach the party first and offer his services at well below cost or for free. Who can say no to free?
3. Immediately demonstrate the NPC's usefulness.
4. Avoid making the NPC seem too good to be true. Create a minor flaw, and provide a reason or motivation for why she will work for free.

Step 2: Establish Comfort Levels and Make it a Success

Once the NPC has been given the green light, let a few encounters or game sessions go by so the players become comfortable having an NPC involved.

Create a small number of minor situations where the NPC proves her value to the group. After this has been achieved, add more hirelings and followers, one at a time.

Step 2 Tips

1. Let the NPC assume a supportive role—perhaps by handling simple tasks such as administration duties, mending, polishing, restocking, cooking, buying new equipment at reasonable rates, arranging training, supplying heal checks, guarding the camp, and so on. It would be wise, however, to avoid having the NPC do anything the PCs enjoy doing themselves.
2. Roleplay the NPC well. Make her interesting and fun but not too quirky.
3. Have the NPC's performance exceed expectations.
4. Stay organized.
5. Keep it simple. Let the NPC stay in the background most of the time and avoid having the plot revolve around her.
6. Have an NPC serve all the PCs to prevent party conflict. Alternatively, run an NPC who serves one character well to motivate the others to get NPCs of their own.
7. Make it fun, and avoid stealing the PCs' limelight.
8. When the time is right, introduce another hireling or follower by having the NPC refer a relative or friend to the PCs.
9. The NPC should not be a weakness to the party. Resist the temptation to use the NPC against the PCs, such as by becoming a hostage, disappearing, running ahead, starting trouble, or saying the wrong things at the wrong times.
10. Resist any urges you might have for constant interaction with the NPC. It's okay if she fades into the background while important events occur.

Step 3: Create Mutual Dependency

Once players are comfortable with the NPCs who work for or follow their characters, it's time to make them mutually dependent on one another. Mutual dependency ensures that the group continues to associate with hirelings and followers, and paves the way for the final, important step.

Step 3 Tips

1. NPCs should provide true value to the party. You're not attempting to trick the players, and doing so would work against your goal of having the PCs accept the long-term use of hirelings and followers in your campaigns.
2. Add an autopilot feature. Let NPCs perform a reasonable series of tasks in the background for the benefit of the PCs. Have players give you sets of instructions to which you apply timeframes, success levels, and results. What party can resist a number of agents and hirelings performing valuable tasks for them and reporting in from time to time?
3. NPCs should keep their contacts to themselves. In order to increase their value and hold onto their jobs, NPCs should try to be the middlemen in all transactions they're involved with. Consider keeping the identities, locations, and details of contacts, suppliers, informants, employers, relatives, and so on secret from the PCs.
4. Add more adventure. Slowly increase the number of side plots that the NPCs initiate and possibly control, and let them become integral links in main plot threads and adventures as well. If the PCs allow it, the NPCs can eventually become the party's agents, seeking out adventure opportunities that are more lucrative than quests the PCs find for themselves.
5. Have NPCs make requests for research and development projects. Not only will this increase the NPCs' skills and make cool new options available to the PCs, it can become a wonderful source of plot hooks for your stories.
6. Appeal to players' egos. Have rivals, employers, peers, and other important people pay sincere compliments to the characters on their coterie of fine followers and hirelings. In addition to creating fun roleplaying scenes, this technique reinforces the value of the NPCs' association with the party.
7. NPCs should specialize. Hirelings and followers should seek to improve their skills and find a valuable niche in the PCs' lives. They should also work at being better than other NPCs at their job, thus eliminating the competition.
8. Allow cooperation and synergy. The party's network of NPCs should work well with each other. Let one NPC's skills and knowledge synergize with another's to create greater value.
9. Allow growth. Hirelings and followers who gain some degree of success in their field might attract other NPCs and their own followers, thus increasing their value to the PCs. For example, the spy might gather and run a small network of spies, the smith might open a foundry, and so on.
10. Create loyalty. A loyal and trustworthy NPC should be retained at all costs because the PCs can't afford to have their affairs mishandled, possessions stolen, or secrets divulged. Encounters throughout game sessions should demonstrate the hirelings trustworthiness, and players should be rewarded when they demonstrate loyalty to the NPC.

The NPC should not be a weakness to the party. Resist the temptation to use the NPC against the PCs . . .

11. Timeliness is important. NPCs should do their job without missing deadlines and letting down the PCs.
12. Parley can be valuable. If your group doesn't like roleplaying or long conversation scenes, have the NPCs take care of this aspect of the game and just present the players with summaries of the important information when the time is right. Spies, informants, researchers, scholars, sages, and socialites can gather information for the PCs, ensuring that the action keeps coming their way.
13. Make your hirelings unique and therefore irreplaceable. Perhaps she is a monster or from an exotic culture that occasionally plays an important role in your campaign. She might have a rare skill or important body of knowledge that comes into play from time to time.
14. Create revenue streams. The hirelings and followers can become minor income generators for the party. This revenue can be reinvested in the NPCs in the form of payment or new equipment (the NPCs should suggest this), go toward research or craft projects, or perhaps just go straight into the group's treasure chest. If the NPCs become self-supporting, all the better.
15. Build a growing infrastructure. Once a few NPCs are allied with the party, you can start to build a basic infrastructure with such elements as a base of operations, buildings, equipment, experience, skills, relationships, revenue streams, contacts, emergency shelters and supplies, spy networks, and overseers. It's enough to say this exists and to provide occasional updates to the players, or you can let the group delve into as many details as they like.

Step 4: Leverage For DM Benefit

Once the group is reliant on their hirelings and followers, you can start to employ them for your own gaming purposes. While leverage might seem like a negative term, the end goal is always to provide an entertaining and memorable campaign for the players, not to create a DM-versus-player environment. It's an accurate term because it's possible to derive more campaign usefulness from NPCs who have relationships with the PCs than from those who don't.

Step 4 Tips

1. Build up your world. All the infrastructure and NPC maintenance from the previous steps might seem like a lot of work, but another name for it is world building. You do the work anyway, but now it has greater focus and relevance to the party. In addition, the players can ease your planning burden by fleshing things out that are related to their hirelings. Encourage players to create histories, backgrounds, building plans, names, locations, NPC statistics, and so on.
2. Create the impetus for adventure. The PCs should have more motivation to adventure now to meet rising maintenance costs and supply exotic raw materials for their army of craftsmen or merchant contacts.
3. Show consequences. What are the consequences of the PCs' success? These consequences might include rivalry, competition, espionage, and/or defense. If the seeds are planted early with a growing hireling base, then as the PCs reach higher levels, you'll have a natural supply of plots and adventures for them just from the repercussions of their growing power and network of hirelings and followers. Politicians and rulers might want to tap the PCs' as resources and make them allies to their causes. Envious foes might try to take them down a notch. An important follower might want to go his own way and compete with the PCs.
4. Develop plots. NPCs are more than a source of plot hooks. They are great tools for speeding up the pace of your game or guiding a wayward party. NPCs can help untangle complicated plot threads and keep the game moving when the players are stuck. Conversely, a hireling might make a story more complex or twisted by unknowingly acting as a red herring, bait, or a devil's advocate.

> NPCs are more than a source of plot hooks. They are great tools for speeding up the pace of your game . . .

5. Develop your campaign. Increasing and deepening the PCs' relationships with NPCs transforms "the guy who is the plot hook" into the group's favorite innkeeper with a problem. Let your campaign flourish by creating threads that stem from hirelings and followers, and whose scope is greater than the current adventure.

10 WAYS TO MAKE NPC MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT SIMPLE AND EASY

1. Enlist the players' aid. Let players create NPCs and control them. While you might feel secrecy is important, your time is probably best spent on other planning activities. Feel free to track important secrets yourself, just not for every NPC.
2. Assign homework where players create personality profiles or brief NPC backgrounds in exchange for greater control over their NPC hirelings and followers.
3. Create class, skill, equipment, and spell cheat sheets to carry around so you can maintain NPCs while standing in line, watching television, or commuting.
4. Make one night a week "NPC Night." Two hours of focused effort can help you accomplish a lot, and turning this into a weekly ritual will ease campaign maintenance.
5. Use character sheets or index cards to keep NPC

information organized. Use the same style for each NPC so that you can find information quickly. If you allow your players to run a few of your NPCs, consider creating both a DM version and a player version, with information you want to keep secret placed only on your version.

6. Create an NPC binder and organize it with tabs or flags. Group them by PC association, region/location, or type. Be sure to stock the binder with lots of blank paper and character sheets. For more ideas on creating binders and organizational systems, see "DM's Toolbox" in *Dragon* #290.

7. Use Post-It notes for fast note-taking and stick them onto NPC information sheets. Have players transcribe the notes when they have nothing else to do.

8. Designate a player to handle NPCs each session. A quiet, organized player might be a good first choice—you know, the one with the crisp character sheet and tabbed *Player's Handbook*. Or pick a new player to help him become more familiar with the game's rules. It might be wise to rotate this duty if it's taxing. You could also consider bringing in a player to just manage the NPCs if you have a lot of active ones in your game, but if you choose to do so, be aware that this player might grow bored with her role over time. If this happens, you should allow the player to create her own PC and join the group as a full-fledged player. Forcing her to remain the overseer of the NPCs will only create a frustrated, bitter player.

9. Create a character index and update it between sessions with core information and current duties or tasks being carried out, and distribute it to the group for fast reference.

10. For spellcasting followers and hirelings, ask players to make default spell lists for daytime, nighttime, urban locations, rural locations, wilderness locations, adventuring, and other typical situations found in your campaign. Then, depending on the situation, your NPCs can have their default spells ready. This will help streamline and speed up game play.

NPC followers and hirelings are avoided by many groups because DMs are worried about the time investment for planning and managing the NPCs. Players worry about losing play time to other players' henchmen. However, the benefits for employing these types of NPCs are many, chief among them being rewarding campaigns and increased storyline options. Use the four-step process detailed above to ease NPCs into the characters' lives at a manageable pace, stay organized, and don't be afraid to ask for help in order to let followers and hirelings thrive in your game.

DOorDICE.com
LET'S ROLE!™
The Ultimate Source
for
RPGs, CCGs, Tabletop, Board Games,
Miniatures, Dice, Paints,
Anime, Video Games and More!
All your favorites including...
Dungeons & Dragons
Mage Knight
d20 system
REAPER
and much, much more!
Get
10% off
Great games, books, & DVDs!
Offer valid until July 1, 2003
Not valid on sale/select items or game consoles
Coupon Code: 848372
Order Toll Free Today
1 (888) 499-3423
or visit us at
www.DOorDICE.com
http://www.doordice.com

Dungeoncraft

DUNGEON ADVENTURE, PART III
THE INHABITANTS

by Monte Cook

Last month in "Dungeoncraft," we discussed building a dungeon adventure based on the map you create. Now that you've got your map and have a good idea of the inhabitants and features you want in your dungeon, you're ready for the next step: placing the monsters, traps, and treasures into particular rooms on the map.

Unfortunately, many DMs fulfill this step without giving it much thought: A handful of soldiers are placed in Room 7, an important NPC and some treasure are plopped into Room 26, and so on. Although this method works, it often results in a less dynamic adventure, and hence, a less-than-enthusiastic gaming group. Your goal as DM is to create a "dynamic dungeon," one in which the inhabitants don't just sit in their rooms and wait for adventurers to come slaughter them. In a dynamic dungeon, the DM creates more of a realistic, organic setting where the actions of the PCs affect and change the environment.

REALISTIC CONSIDERATIONS

Every dungeon is its own ecosystem. Before you can decide how the PCs will influence the dungeon and its inhabitants, you should give some thought to what it was like there before the PCs came barging in. You know the drill—what do the monsters eat? Where do they get their water? The basics.

Also consider the paths that the inhabitants take when roaming the dungeon. How does the displacer beast get around in a dungeon full of locked doors? What route must the orcs take in order to get to the exit? Each of the dungeon's inhabitants should have not only a way to get at food and water, but also a way to get out of the dungeon (unless there's a good reason for them to never leave). An exit route is important since most dungeons are not large or diverse enough to completely support either a predator or an herbivore, and because the creature had to have found a way into the dungeon in the first place.

All of these are important considerations, because when the PCs show up, the ecology is going to be disrupted. An umber hulk that the PCs are completely unaware of might find all its food sources wiped out by the intruders. Thus, it might have to take actions to fix the situation—come after the PCs, begin raiding nearby farms, or whatever. A group of hell hounds cut off from their normal path to the exit might begin to try to break through an old locked door they never bothered with before.

ORGANIZED OR NOT ORGANIZED

Although all dungeons can be dynamic, how it's implemented depends on how organized it is. If the dungeon is an evil temple and all the inhabitants work for the clerics of the temple, then they most likely have all manner of plans and contingencies in place for when intruders come. The guards know to listen for sounds of trouble, and they are positioned close enough so that no one guard post can be taken out without the others being alerted (unless the intruders are particularly capable). If the intruders pass into the inner sanctum, the surviving guards from the outer posts are called in to help the clerics repel them. And so on.

It is unlikely, however, that the miscellaneous and mostly unrelated inhabitants of a dungeon that is now in ruins have a joint plan for what to do in case of trouble. Although these inhabitants might not coordinate their actions, they can still react to sounds and sights of danger, move around as needed, and in general act like actual, living creatures. A gang of lamias might not be allied with the nearby fire giant, but if they see the giant defeated, they know to be wary and set up some sort of defense or flee.

REACTIVE NOT PROACTIVE

Often times, in other contexts, people discuss how being proactive is better than being reactive. In a dungeon (or any roleplaying environment), however, the opposite is true. It's easy to be proactive in a dungeon. The DM—"roleplaying" the dungeon builders—figures that the PCs will probably go down a certain corridor, and so he places a devious trap in that

corridor and has the kuo-toas in the chamber at the end of the corridor watch and come running if they see intruders caught in the trap. This kind of advance planning is commendable—it's good dungeon design—but it's only half the story.

Planning for what the PCs might do ahead of time is being proactive, but what happens after the PCs actually arrive and do what they do, which might or might not be what you (and thus, the dungeon's inhabitants) thought they would do?

Now it's time to be reactive. You've got to figure out how the inhabitants react to various actions taken by the PCs. This can be handled in a few different ways.

The Alarm Model

One approach is to place the inhabitants in the dungeon and then determine the likelihood that the inhabitants of one location will hear and become aware of activity in another location. If you determine that they are aware, decide what they do in response. For example, you have two rooms, each connected by a hallway 50 feet long, with a single closed door between them. Bandits lurk in both rooms. If the PCs engage one of the groups in combat, can the other group hear the fight?

Actually, the game has mechanics for just this situation. The DC to hear the sounds of battle is -10. This is modified by +1 for every 10 feet of distance, plus +5 for the door. So the DC is 0. This means that anyone making a Listen check (unless they actually have a sizable penalty due to few or no ranks and a terrible Wisdom score) is going to hear the fight. Thus, you can know, even before the PCs show up, that if they attack the bandits in the first room, those in the second room will come to reinforce their allies, go alert the leader, use a magic item to summon an earth elemental to go deal with their foes, and so on. You can even estimate how long it will take them to put these actions into effect.

This method allows a kind of domino effect to occur in the dungeon. If the NPCs in area A hear the sounds of battle in area B, they come running. However, if the NPCs in area C hear sounds of activity in area B, they come running. And so on. Make sure that you don't design a dungeon where the PCs end up fighting everything in the whole place in one big encounter (unless that's what you want). Also remember that the "alarm" might encourage activities beyond running to reinforce allies. Some inhabitants might flee if they hear fighting. Others might cast certain spells, lock doors, summon more allies, hide, prepare for negotiation, and so on.

> This kind of advance planning is commendable—it's good dungeon design—but it's only half the story.

The difference between this sort of "reactive" model and being proactive is that the inhabitants don't necessarily know ahead of time that this will happen—just you. You're not planning for the NPCs, you're planning for the game. You're being reactive ahead of time.

TAKING 0

In the alarm model, it's important to know when NPCs can hear things going on around them. However, skill checks are normally used when someone is trying to do something. An NPC guard makes a Listen check because he's on duty, alert, and expecting trouble, but what about NPCs who are not alert? What about a room full of bandits playing cards? Surely they don't deserve the same kind of Listen check as the alert guard.

To simulate this, you can assume that all guards take 10 on their Listen checks and that other inhabitants who are not actively being "alert" take 0. "Taking 0" is just like taking 10. You assume that the character taking 0 got a 0 result on the die because he wasn't even trying. However, when the DC is low, or when skill bonuses are high, taking 0 can still result in a lot of success. It allows you to determine at which point someone who isn't paying any attention still might hear something (or Spot something).

You can do something similar with sleeping characters, but instead of taking 0, they take -10.

The Contingency Model

Very similar to the alarm model, this method of making a dynamic dungeon assumes that the dungeon's residents will act differently depending on the circumstances, the most obvious being the appearance of intruders (most likely the PCs). You simply need to determine what those triggering circumstances are and what the resulting contingency might be. If the PCs do X, the NPCs respond by doing Y.

This method of design has a more general approach than the alarm model. You can set up all sorts of circumstances and contingencies. This could be called the cause-and-effect model. For example, the PCs wipe out all the guards in a prison, so the prisoners begin a revolt and escape attempts. The PCs open a sealed door to get into a vault, and something escapes from the vault. The dynamic feeling comes from the obvious changes to the status quo that the PCs inflict. Some results could be bad for the PCs—perhaps a curse on the dungeon raises anything slain as a zombie 15 minutes after its demise. Now, after hacking their way through the bandits to get to the inner portion

of the dungeon, the PCs have to hack their way out through a horde of zombies.

You could also set up an extraneous circumstance not caused by the PCs and have the actions of the inhabitants be based upon that. For example: the passage of time. If the dungeon is built around an active volcano, the inhabitants might move to different areas or take different actions depending on the stage the volcano is in (calm, rumbling, or erupting). As a far more simplistic example, the inhabitants might have a different set of actions or reactions depending on whether it is night or day. They might, for example, try to be more alert at night, but there will be fewer people awake and on guard.

Some possible circumstance/contingencies (both reliant and independent of the PCs) include:

1. **Disguise/Bluff:** If intruders successfully convince the inhabitants that they are something other than what they really are (allies, fellow cultists, mercenaries looking for work, and so on) the inhabitants likely react in a non-threatening manner.

2. **Strength of Opposition:** If the dungeon is invaded by a large group of powerful adventurers, the inhabitants might work together to repel them. If the PCs are subtle and sneaky in their approach, the inhabitants might react more casually, mistakenly believing the threat to be less than it is.

3. **Death of Allies/Enemies:** A group of slaves might act differently depending on if their masters are alive or not. Likewise, if the PCs wipe out the ogres in a dungeon, the ogres' goblin allies might just flee rather than try to take on a force that just wiped out their obviously more powerful allies. A pair of criosphinxes might react favorably to characters that would otherwise be enemies if they slay the dangerous medusa that had been a threat to the creatures.

4. **Ritual/Ceremony:** Some of the inhabitants are conducting a magical ritual, and depending on what stage they are on, the rest of the inhabitants act differently. The closer the ceremony gets to completion, the more fanatically the defenders fight off those who would spoil it.

5. **Tides of War:** Somewhere, outside of the dungeon, a battle rages. Depending on how one side fares in the conflict, the inhabitants of the dungeon take alternative actions.

6. **Magical Conditions Met:** The traps, rooms, and inhabitants of the dungeon change based on some magical sequence triggered by the PCs. Perhaps each missing piece added to a magical statue in the center of the dungeon completely reshapes the entire place, making each pass through the dungeon different than the last.

7. **Phase of the Moon:** The dungeon is based around some measure of time. At certain times (such as during a particular phase of the moon), some walls come down and others go up. Certain doors seal and others unseal. Certain inhabitants are more active. Perhaps there is an iron golem that only patrols at a particular time or a demon that only enters this plane (in the dungeon) during a specific period.

The Random Path Model

This method for designing dynamic dungeons is very different from the previous two. Initially, it doesn't rely on PC actions at all. This is called the random path model because, in effect, you're randomly generating the path that the inhabitants take in their daily life in the dungeon.

An inhabitant isn't placed in a specific location in the dungeon. Instead, you determine ahead of time all of the places in the dungeon that the inhabitant might be, and determine the probability that it is in any of those places at any given time.

For example, there is a 30% chance that a yeth hound pack will be in their lair, a 40% chance that they are out hunting (in one of three other areas in the dungeon, each with an equal chance of containing the pack), and a 30% chance that they are at the nearby pool getting a drink or waiting to ambush other creatures getting a drink. You can even create more options. Perhaps 80% of the time you use those chances, but 20% of the time half of the pack is in the lair and the rest of the pack is out hunting.

In addition, the chances might be contingent upon the action of the PCs or other NPCs. The yeth hound pack's range might broaden if other predators in the dungeon are slain. There might be an erinyes that attempts to capture and *charm* one or more of the yeth hounds if given the time, reducing the pack's numbers and changing the encounters the PCs might have with the erinyes.

Another way to do this is to simply generate a list of all of the dungeon's inhabitants and then present a random encounter list for each location. As the PCs encounter (and probably slay) inhabitants, you mark them off the list. For example, in a dungeon that houses orcs and gnolls, two races that are known enemies, as well as an owlbear that has become friendly with the gnolls, and an independent gray ooze, a sample room's encounter chart might look like this:

d%	Encounter
01-10	1d6 orcs
11-15	2d4+2 orcs
16	1d2 dead orcs (killed by the gnolls)
17-26	1d8 gnolls
27-31	2d6 gnolls
32	1d2 dead gnolls (killed by the orcs)
33-35	1d6 gnolls and the owlbear
36-40	1d6 orcs fighting 1d6 gnolls
41-45	The owlbear
46-50	The gray ooze
51-00	No encounter

Every time the PCs move through an area or room, roll on the corresponding encounter chart. Thus, the first time the PCs move through an area it might be empty, but the next time, the PCs might encounter an orc patrol. Remember to keep track of the total number of creatures encountered. For example, once the

PCs encounter the owlbear, they won't see another one, and if they manage to slay twenty-four orcs, there are no more orcs to find. If a roll on the encounter chart results in one of these now "wiped out" populations, treat the roll as a "no encounter" result. You should be aware that the random method makes using any kind of alarm method impossible to implement and anything but the most basic contingency method very tricky. If you don't know where the inhabitants are going to be, you can't plan for how they will react to events in nearby rooms.

You might consider using this method for the majority of the dungeon's rooms, and then have some set encounters (the orc base, for example) that are not random.

TRAPS

Traps are traps. No matter what method you use, no matter whether you strive for a dynamic dungeon or not, traps are simply static, "proactive" set pieces that you place in the dungeon beforehand. The only consideration you need to make regarding traps (if present) is that as the dungeon inhabitants move around, the traps are either as much a hazard to them as the PCs or the monsters have some method of getting around these hazards.

Don't design a contingency, a random chance, or any other plan that puts an encounter with an inhabitant in an area reached only by bypassing a trap without a way for those inhabitants to do so.

The Plot Model

This method is similar to the random path model in that no inhabitants are assigned to any one location. However, unlike the random path model, you don't have the encounters occur randomly—you control them. You've got your map and a list of all the dungeon's inhabitants. You've got an idea of where the individual lairs are, where the water supplies are, and so on. When the PCs enter the dungeon, you start placing encounters as seems appropriate. If the encounter seems to need more opponents, you decide that some inhabitants overheard the battle and came running.

This is a fast and loose system and should only be tried by DMs with some experience. Some pitfalls can include misjudging the difficulty of encounters and a loss of verisimilitude due to what might appear to be arbitrariness to the players. Done well, however, things can move smoothly, and the players will never know how you've set things up. To them, the dungeon will seem like a realistic locale.

Remember to keep things dynamic. Since you haven't placed any inhabitants in set locations, have them move around. The PCs might encounter someone in an area that was previously empty or in an area they thought they had "cleared."

MORE TRICKS FOR A DYNAMIC DUNGEON

Here are some more easy-to-implement tricks that will help make your dungeon dynamic.

- Have the PCs spot something moving around, far down a corridor, that then disappears.
- Place bits of half-eaten food, the signs of a recent battle, or other signs of actual habitation in "empty" rooms.
- Describe sounds of roars, screams, movement, battle, or other activities far off.
- Include encounters where dungeon inhabitants are encountering each other at the same time as the PCs.
- Change or alter rooms the PCs have already encountered. For example, when the PCs come back to a corridor they've already passed through, there's a blood smear on the floor, a scattering of broken glass, or a message scrawled on the wall.
- Keep creatures moving. If the rogue reports back to the group that she saw some trolls when scouting ahead, have the trolls be gone when the full party arrives. Now the PCs must either hunt down the trolls or be wary of ambush.
- Restock the dungeon. If the PCs raid the dungeon, leave, and then return weeks or months later, they should find at least a few of the former lairs of slain monsters now filled with new inhabitants, either relocated from other parts of the dungeon or new arrivals from somewhere else.

THE POINT OF IT ALL

The point of a dynamic dungeon is that it feels more like a real place. In a real labyrinthine, underground structure, an invader is never going to know for sure that an area he previously secured is truly safe, because real foes move around, particularly since they know the area better than the invader. They react to circumstances and act accordingly. Realistic dungeon inhabitants don't wait for the PCs to come to them, and even if they don't know that they are under attack, they don't stay in one place all the time. This is a lot for a DM to handle and keep track of, so doing some preparation ahead of time can really pay off in making things move smoothly.

In the next installment of "Dungeoncraft," we'll talk about "weird dungeons," which include less common, but really fun stuff.

Sage Advice

3.5 SPELL ISSUES OFFICIAL ANSWERS

by Skip Williams

This month, the Sage considers questions arising from the newly revised core rulebooks for the D&D game, with particular emphasis on the many aspects of the *mirror image* spell.

Does the *feeblemind* spell only affect a character's base Intelligence score, or does the spell make the subject's Intelligence score 1 regardless of magical bonuses? If the spell only affects base Intelligence, will any magic that boosts Intelligence (such as a *potion of fox's cunning*) break the spell? Do you have to get your Intelligence to 3 or higher to break the spell?

A *feeblemind* spells reduces the subject's Intelligence and Charisma scores to 1 (not just Intelligence). Of course, if the subject already has a score of 0, *feeblemind* doesn't increase the score. The subject's Intelligence and Charisma become 1 (or stay at 0) regardless of any enhancements or other increases to those scores.

A *feeblemind* effect remains until the subject receives a *heal, limited wish, miracle,* or *wish* spell. The subject cannot benefit from any effect that increases Intelligence or Charisma until the *feeblemind* effect is removed.

The *feeblemind* spell keeps you from casting spells, presumably because it makes your Intelligence and Charisma scores 1. What if your Wisdom score governs your spells? Can you still cast spells then? Can you use spell-like abilities? Supernatural abilities? Extraordinary abilities?

You can't cast any spells when you're feebleminded, no matter what ability governs your spells. The spell scrambles the higher functions of your brain, rendering you unable to use spells and suppressing your Intelligence and Charisma scores.

Feeblemind prevents the use of spell-like abilities, but not supernatural or extraordinary abilities. Also, as noted in the spell description, you cannot use any Intelligence- or Charisma-based skills while feebleminded.

Is it possible to cast the *permanency* spell from a scroll? If so, who pays the XP cost for the spell effect made permanent, the scroll creator or the individual who casts the spell from the scroll? Who must meet the minimum level requirement for making a particular spell permanent? For example, *see invisibility* has a minimum level of 10th. Does the scroll creator or the individual who casts the spell from the scroll have to meet this minimum? Does the minimum level refer to arcane spellcaster's caster level or character level?

In general, when you create a scroll with a spell that has an XP cost, you have to pay the XP cost for casting the spell along with the costs for creating the scroll (see Creating Scrolls in Chapter 7 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). Since the scroll creator has paid all the costs, the scroll user doesn't have to pay them.

In the case of the *permanency* spell, however, it's best to make the scroll user pay the cost of actually making a particular spell's effect permanent. The scroll creator still pays the XP cost to make the scroll.

You must use the spell's caster level to determine if the spell meets the minimum level to make a spell permanent. In the case of a character casting a spell herself, the spell's caster level is the caster's class level in the class that made the spell available in the first place. For example, when a 12th-level wizard/3rd-level fighter casts any wizard spell, the spell's caster level is 12th.

In the case of a spell cast from a scroll, the spell's caster level is the scroll's caster level. The scroll's creator sets the caster level for the scroll when making the scroll, as noted in the Magic Item Descriptions section of Chapter 7 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Exactly how many bolts of lightning can you call with a *call lightning* spell? Can you save up the bolts you're entitled to call every minute, or do you lose them if you don't call them when they're due? Or does the spell last until you've called all the bolts the spell can produce?

Once you cast the spell, you can call a bolt of lightning every round, not every minute. During the round

Borders illustrated by David Wahlstrom

when you cast the spell, you can call a bolt as part of the spellcasting action. During later rounds, it takes a standard action to call a bolt.

The spell's duration starts running the moment you finish the spell. You can call a maximum of one bolt each round while the spell lasts. If you let a round go by without calling a bolt, you can't save that bolt for later, but you can keep calling bolts during later rounds until the spell's duration runs out.

For a good cleric, what kind of action is it to spontaneously convert a prepared spell into a *cure* spell?

It's not an action at all. It's part of casting the spell (and thus part of the action you use to cast the spell). Evil clerics spontaneously casting *inflict* spells use the same rule.

You can apply a metamagic feat to a spontaneous spell, but when you do so, the spell takes at least a full-round action to cast (or an extra full-round action if the spell normally has a casting time of 1 full round). See Spontaneous Casting and Metamagic Feats in Chapter 5 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Are the multiple figments from a *mirror image* spell legal targets for cleaving? That is, if you have the Cleave feat and you hit an image and destroy it, can you then attack another target within reach (such as another figment from the spell or perhaps the spell user)? What about Whirlwind Attack? Can you use this feat to attack all the images around the spell user? What about spells that allow multiple targets, such as *magic missile*? Can you aim *magic missiles* at different images?

For all intents and purposes, the figments from a foe's *mirror image* spell are your foes. You aim your spells and your attacks at the figments just as though they were real creatures. Any spell you can aim at a creature you can aim at an image. When you use a spell that allows you to select multiple creatures as targets, such as *magic missile*, you can choose multiple images as targets.

If you have the Cleave or Great Cleave feat, destroying an image with a melee attack triggers the feat (and your cleaving attack might well strike the spell user instead of another image). Likewise, you can use Whirlwind Attack to strike at any image you can reach. A Whirlwind Attack almost certainly will allow you to strike once at the spell user (see next question).

Is there a way to decide which squares the figments from a *mirror image* spell occupy? Or do the images distribute themselves randomly? If it's the latter, how does the DM decide where they go?

Although the spell description says the images from a *mirror image* spell always stay within 5 feet of either the user or another image, it's easiest to assume that all the images occupy the same space the spell user occupies. Any attack that can reach the user's space can affect an image.

The *mirror image* spell description says the images have an Armor Class of 10 + size modifier + Dexterity modifier. Is it possible to improve this with spells the spellcaster casts on herself, such as *shield* or *mage armor*? If so, why doesn't the spell description say the images have the caster's Armor Class? What happens if the caster has cover from her surroundings? Will cover improve the images' ACs? What about concealment? Will fog or foliage produce a miss chance for a foe that aims an attack at an image? What about magical concealment, such as a *blur* or *displacement* spell?

The images from a *mirror image* spell don't use the caster's Armor Class. Use the formula in the spell description to calculate each image's Armor Class (10 + caster's size modifier + caster's Dexterity modifier). Use the caster's current Dexterity modifier for each image's Armor Class, no matter how the caster happened to get that modifier. Any Armor Class improvements the caster might have from equipment she carries or wears, or from magic operating on her person, don't apply to the images. For example, a Medium user with a Dexterity score of 16, a *shield* spell, and a suit of *+2 leather armor* has an Armor Class of 21 (10 +4 shield, +4 armor, and +3 Dexterity), but her images have an Armor Class of 13 (10 +3 Dexterity).

For all intents and purposes, the figments from a foe's mirror image spell are your foes.

It's easiest to assume the images share the user's location on the battlefield (see previous question), and gain any cover bonuses that might apply to the spell user in that location. If the character in the previous example were behind cover, she would have an Armor Class of 25, and her images would have an Armor Class of 17.

If the user has concealment from her surroundings, the images have the same concealment. The images also look just like the caster, and they share purely visual effects such as the *blur* or *displacement* spell. If the *mirror image* user is also using either of these effects, an attack aimed at an image has the same miss chance an attack aimed at the caster has.

What happens if a *mirror image* user is incorporeal? Are the user's images also incorporeal? Do attacks aimed at the images have the incorporeal miss chance? If the incorporeal user moves through a wall, can the images move through the wall, too? What happens if the user goes to another plane? Do the

images go along? What if the *mirror image* user employs a *blink* spell?

As "Sage Advice" pointed out back in issue #303, incorporeal spell casters create corporeal effects. So the figments from an incorporeal user's *mirror image* spell are themselves corporeal. Attacks aimed at the images have no incorporeal miss chance.

The images, however, appear like the caster and move as the caster moves. If an incorporeal user moves through a wall, its mirror images also appear to move through the wall.

If a mirror image user moves to another plane, the images go along. If the user also employs a *blink* spell, the images blink right along with the user, and any attack aimed at an image has the same miss chance (50%) it has if aimed at the caster.

The new descriptions for the flaming, frost, and shock weapon special abilities say that these weapons' energy effects only work on command.

The flaming burst, icy burst, and shocking burst weapon powers require a critical hit to trigger the burst. What happens when you attack a foe that isn't subject to critical hits? Will the burst power work? A flaming burst, icy burst, or shocking burst weapon also is a flaming, frost, or shock weapon, respectively. What happens when the burst power is triggered, does the burst damage augment or replace the damage from the energy power?

A burst power has its normal effect against foes that aren't subject to critical hits. If you strike such a foe and your attack roll is good enough to threaten a critical hit, go ahead and roll to confirm the critical. If you confirm the critical, the burst power is activated, but the foe doesn't take any extra weapon damage. For example, you have a *+1 flaming burst long sword* and you hit a wight with it, rolling a 19 (good enough for a threat with a long sword). The wight is an undead creature, and not subject to critical hits, bit you roll to confirm the critical anyway. If you confirm the critical, the wight takes normal damage from the sword (1d8 points if you're a Medium character, plus your Strength modifier), not double damage as a critical hit. The sword's burst power kicks in however, dealing an extra 1d10 points of fire damage to the wight.

Damage from a burst weapon is in addition to any damage from the weapon's energy power. If the energy power is activated (see next question), you deal 1d6 points of energy damage from the energy power, plus extra energy damage from the burst power (see the power descriptions). For example, a confirmed critical hit from a *+1 flaming burst long sword* deals 1d6+1d10 points of fire damage in addition to the weapon damage from the critical hit itself.

The new descriptions for the flaming, frost, and shock weapon special abilities say that these weapons' energy effects only work on command. Why was this changed in the revision? Does that mean that their wielders must use a standard action to activate them for each attack? Or do the energy effects last awhile? If so, how long do they last? What's the chance that you burn (or freeze or shock) yourself when holding onto an activated weapon? Can you put away an activated weapon without damaging the scabbard where you store it? What happens if you have ammunition with these effects? Do you have to activate each piece of ammunition separately? What happens if you have a flaming, frost, and shock weapon? Would you have to activate each property separately? Finally, how does all this affect flaming burst, icy burst, and shocking burst weapons? Do these weapons' flame, frost, and shock properties have to be active for the burst powers to work?

The flaming, frost, and shock weapon special abilities always have been command activated, the revision just made that more clear.

Activating an energy power requires a standard action, but once you activate the energy power, the power works until you use another action to deactivate it. You can activate or deactivate one of these powers on up to 50 pieces of ammunition at the same time, provided that all the ammunition is in your possession, all the ammunition is the same kind, and all the ammunition has the same power.

Any attack you make with an activated weapon deals energy damage to your foe if you hit—you don't have to do anything special to deal energy damage with an activated weapon.

A burst weapon's burst power is use activated and it works even when the weapon's energy power is not activated (see the last sentence in each power's description).

The energy from a flaming, frost, shock, flaming burst, icy burst, or shocking burst weapon never harms you while you're wielding or carrying the activated weapon (see the power descriptions), nor will it harm your equipment. If you lose or set down an activated weapon, the energy it produces will harm other objects it touches, so it is best to deactivate it first.

The character creating such a weapon decides how it can be activated. Most such weapons probably are made so that the wielders can activate all three powers simultaneously, or activate them one at a time, as desired.

Send me 1 year (12 issues) for only $45.00!

NAME (please print) _____ DATE OF BIRTH _____

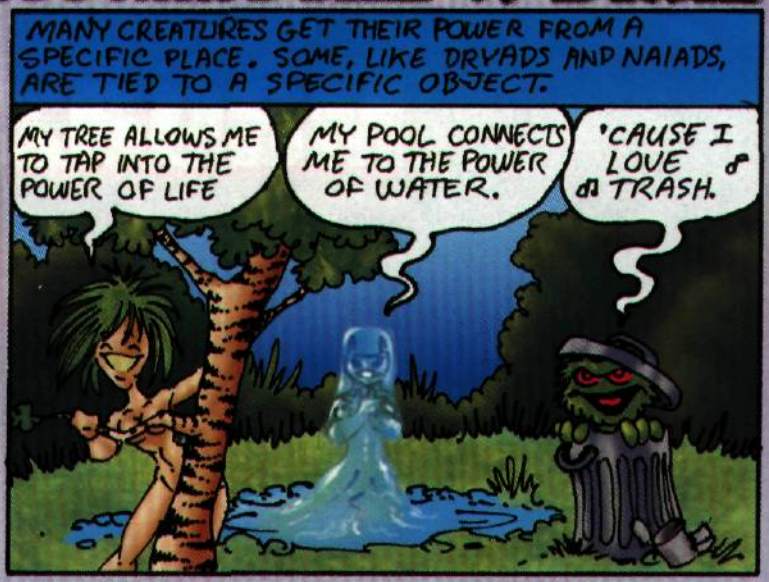
ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____ ☐ Payment enclosed

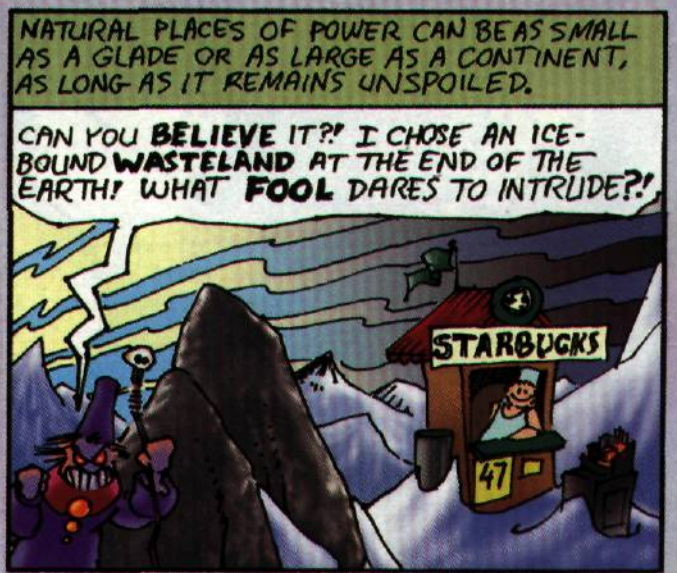
PHONE NUMBER _____ E-MAIL ADDRESS _____ ☐ Bill me

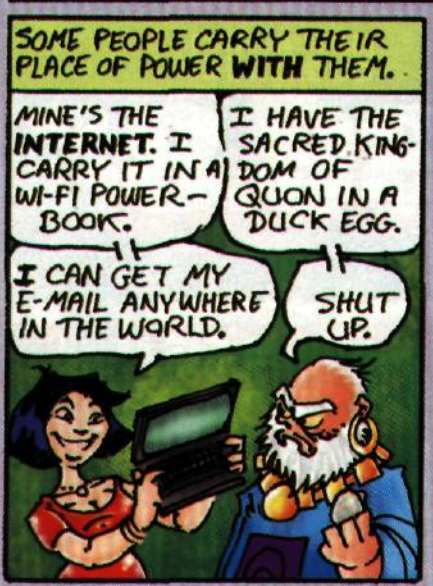
Please allow 6-8 weeks for delivery. *Canadian orders: 1 year $58.50. Foreign orders: 1 year for $99.00. US funds only. Also order online at www.paizo.com. BLD 097

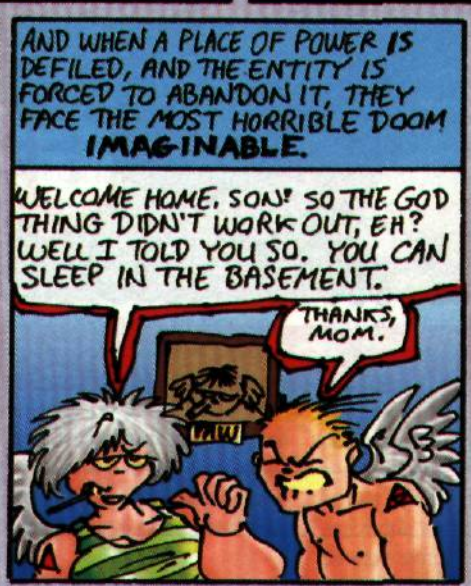
PHIL FOGLIO'S WHAT'S NEW WITH PHIL & DIXIE


MANY CREATURES GET THEIR POWER FROM A SPECIFIC PLACE. SOME, LIKE DRYADS AND NAIADS, ARE TIED TO A SPECIFIC OBJECT.
MY TREE ALLOWS ME TO TAP INTO THE POWER OF LIFE
MY POOL CONNECTS ME TO THE POWER OF WATER.
'CAUSE I LOVE TRASH.

MANY DEITIES USE TEMPLES AND ALTARS, BECAUSE THEY CHANNEL POWER AND BELIEF FROM WORSHIPPERS VERY EFFICIENTLY. THIS IS WHY DESECRATING AN ALTAR IS SO THREATENING.
TERRIBLE NEWS, OH GREAT BOZ! LIGHTNING HAS DESTROYED THE ENTIRE LADIES ALTAR DECORATION COMMITTEE!
AH— DECORATION COMMITTEE YOU SAY...


NATURAL PLACES OF POWER CAN BE AS SMALL AS A GLADE OR AS LARGE AS A CONTINENT, AS LONG AS IT REMAINS UNSPOILED.
CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?! I CHOSE AN ICE-BOUND WASTELAND AT THE END OF THE EARTH! WHAT FOOL DARES TO INTRUDE?!
STARBUCKS
47


SOME PEOPLE CARRY THEIR PLACE OF POWER WITH THEM.
MINE'S THE INTERNET. I CARRY IT IN A WI-FI POWER-BOOK.
I HAVE THE SACRED KINGDOM OF QUON IN A DUCK EGG.
I CAN GET MY E-MAIL ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD.
SHUT UP.


AND WHEN A PLACE OF POWER IS DEFILED, AND THE ENTITY IS FORCED TO ABANDON IT, THEY FACE THE MOST HORRIBLE DOOM IMAGINABLE.
WELCOME HOME, SON! SO THE GOD THING DIDN'T WORK OUT, EH? WELL I TOLD YOU SO. YOU CAN SLEEP IN THE BASEMENT.
THANKS, MOM.

Buy our books or read FREE comics at our Web site:
www.studiofoglio.com

This month's colors were done by the ever-fabulous Cheyenne Wright. Thanks, Cheyenne!

BYE!

DRAGON® AD INDEX

Issue #311 · September 2003
Vol. XXVIII · Number 4

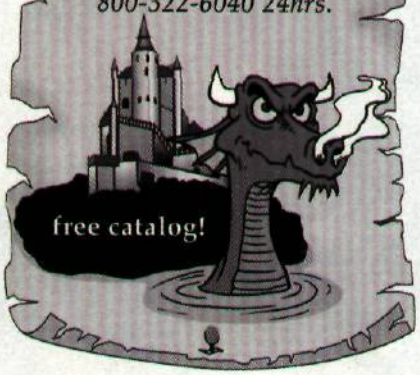
Product	Page
Crystal Caste	
Miniatures	31
Dancing Dragon	
Dragon Gifts and Collectibles	105
Do or Dice	
Dice	95
Dork Storm Press	
Nodwick & Dork Tower	61
Fantasy Flight Games	
Sorcery & Steam: Portals & Planes	108
Hit Pointe	
Out of Print D&D	105
Iron Wind Metals	
Miniatures	41
Malhavoc Press	
Arcana Unearthed	63
Midnight Syndicate	
D&D Soundtrack	81
Mongoose	
Babylon 5	83
d20 Fantasy Books	37
Noble Knight Games	
Out of Print D&D	105
Paizo	
DUNGEON Subscriptions	103
DRAGON Subscriptions	85
DRAGON Back Issues	89
Rackham	
Miniatures	39
Reaper Miniatures	
Miniatures	20–21
Rhino	
Scourge of Worlds	71
RPG Resources	
d20stuff.com	105
Sony Playstation	
Arc the Lad	6–7
Tangible Media Inc.	
Gothic II	9
The Temple of Elemental Evil	2–3
Voyager Games	
The Ancient Lands	35
White Wolf	
Gamma World	63
Ravenloft Player's Handbook	53
Wizards of the Coast	
Dragonlance Campaign Setting	27
Miniatures Handbook	17
Harbinger Miniatures	19
Revised Core Rule Books	11, 13, 14–15

Discover Dragons!
Encounter rare, mysterious, & whimsical dragons in the world's only all dragon catalog!
Unique gifts & collectibles, t-shirts, prints, pewter, & limited edition artifacts.

Dancing Dragon

www.dancingdragon.com

800-322-6040 24hrs.



SUBSCRIBE NOW!

www.paizo.com

Thy Quest for Out-Of-Print Games Endeth Here.

Find those rare games and also save up to 50% on retail products! We buy, sell and trade for new and out-of-print RPG's, Miniatures and Wargames. View our online inventory of over 15,000 products at www.nobleknight.com or write for a free catalog to 2219 Green Valley Dr, Janesville, WI, 53546 Thousands of gamers can't be wrong! Satisfaction is guaranteed!

WWW.NOBLEKNIGHT.COM

GET THEM WHILE THEY LAST

DRAGON®
Back Issues

www.paizo.com/backissues
Offer good only while supplies last.

To Order DRAGON back issues:
call 425-289-0060
between 9:00AM and 5:00PM PST
or Email
backissues@paizo.com

SEEKING OUT-OF-PRINT TITLES?
NEED THE NEW STUFF TOO?

D&D® 3RD EDITION
d20
AD&D® 2ND EDITION
AD&D® 1ST EDITION
BASIC D&D®

25 YEARS OF TSR... the hit pointe ALL IN ONE SPOT

http://www.hitpointe.com

Mail-order Game Shop
Specializing in Used and Out-of-Print
D&D®, AD&D® and
White Wolf's World of Darkness®
game products.

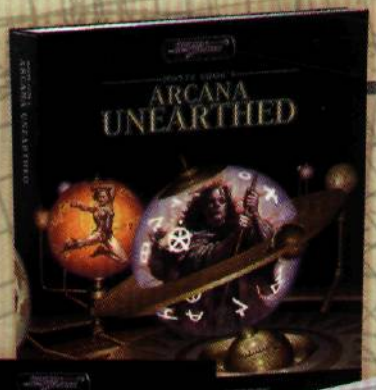
No computer? Write for current price list:

540 North Lapeer Road, Suite 255
Orion Township, MI 48362

THE TRAINING WHEELS COME OFF!

You've been playing the new edition of the world's most popular fantasy roleplaying game for three years now. You know the game.

Now make it new again.



MONTE COOK'S
ARCANA UNEARTHED:
A VARIANT PLAYER'S HANDBOOK

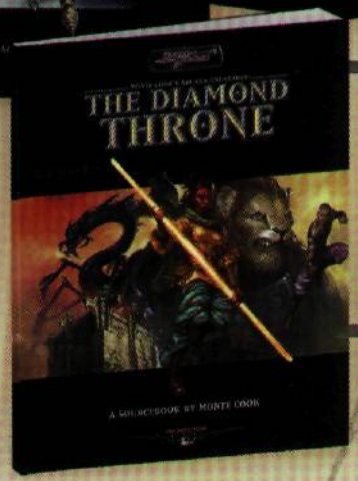
ISBN 1-58846-065-7 • WW16140 • 256 pages • $29.95 U.S.

Arcana Unearthed is a complete handbook offering players new races, classes, and character options. It also includes alternate ways to handle spellcasting and other game functions while remaining true to the 3rd Edition core and revised rules.

DM'S SCREEN AND PLAYER'S GUIDE

ISBN 1-58846-059-2 • WW16142 • Screen + 32 pages • $15.95 U.S.

This perfect companion to ***Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed*** rulebook offers a stunning three-panel horizontal screen with all the charts needed to run the game, plus a double-sized player's reference card and a 32-page supplement with character sheets, archetypes, and conversion guides.



THE DIAMOND THRONE

ISBN 1-58846-057-6 • WW16141 • 96 pages • $18.95 U.S.

Provides fundamental gameplay support for the variant rules of ***Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed***, including new prestige classes, monsters, magic items, and setting background details. Use it with any d20 campaign.

And look for these official tie-in products from our publishing partners: ***Plague of Dreams*** from Fiery Dragon Productions and ***Siege on Ebonring Keep*** from Mystic Eye Games offer introductory adventures. And add to your gaming experience with full-color counters in ***Counter Collection IV: The World of the Diamond Throne*** from Fiery Dragon Productions and official miniatures from Iron Wind Metals. Plus, look for modules coming soon from Necromancer Games!

SWORD & SORCERY

MALHAVOC PRESS®

Free bonus material at www.montecook.com

©2003 Monte J. Cook. Malhavoc is a registered trademark owned by Monte J. Cook. Sword & Sorcery is a trademark of White Wolf Publishing. All rights reserved.
UNEARTHED ARCANA is a trademark of Wizards of the Coast, Inc., a subsidiary of Hasbro, Inc. ARCANA UNEARTHED is used with Wizards' permission, and all rights are reserved.

LEGENDS & LAIRS™

d20 system™

Available July 2003

DD40
176-page hardcover
$24.95

Sorcery & Steam

Sorcery & Steam is a d20 System sourcebook for players and GMs looking to add a magical industrial revolution to their fantasy campaigns. This hardcover volume includes everything you need to bring the steampunk genre to life. Highlights include:

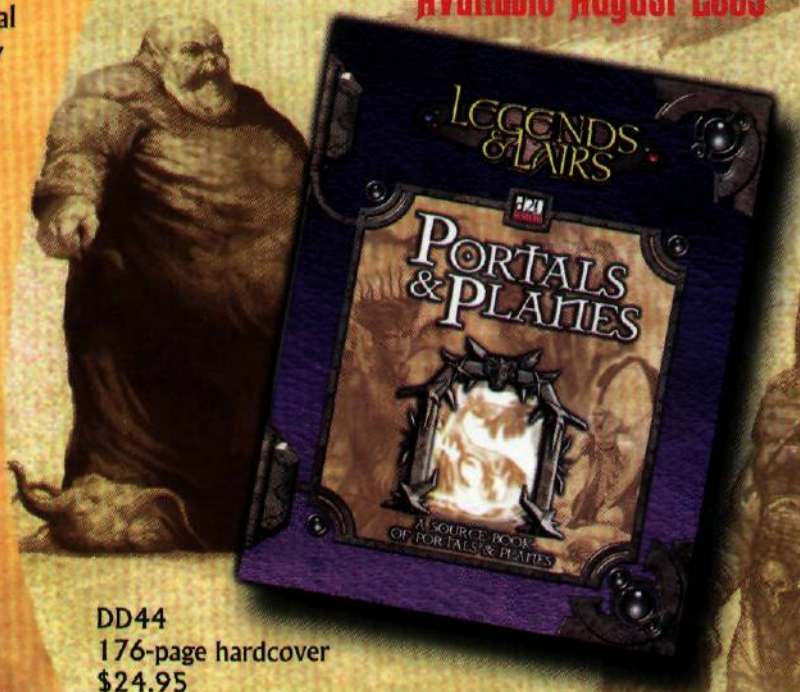
- A new core class, the artificer, along with several new prestige classes, including the ergomancer and the clockwork knight.
- Dozens of new feats, spells, and magic items, as well as information on how to use existing ones in a steampunk fantasy setting.
- Rules for the creation of steam-powered vehicles, constructs, and other items, including weapons and armor.

Portals & Planes

Portals & Planes is a d20 System resource designed for players and DMs who want to incorporate world-hopping, alternate realities, time travel, and planar and dimensional adventures into their campaigns. This 176-page hardcover volume includes everything you need to explore this exciting fantasy genre:

- New alternate core classes and prestige classes, such as the planewalker and astral manipulator.
- Dozens of new feats, spells, and magic items designed for planar and alternate worlds adventuring, as well as new rules for using existing ones in reality-bending fantasy campaigns.

Available August 2003



DD44
176-page hardcover
$24.95

www.fantasyflightgames.com

'd20 System' and the 'd20 System' logo are Trademarks owned by Wizards of the Coast and are used according to the terms of the d20 System License. The product requires the use of the Dungeons and Dragons® Player's Handbook, Third Edition, published by Wizards of the Coast. Legends & Lairs TM & ©2003 Fantasy Flight Publishing, Inc.